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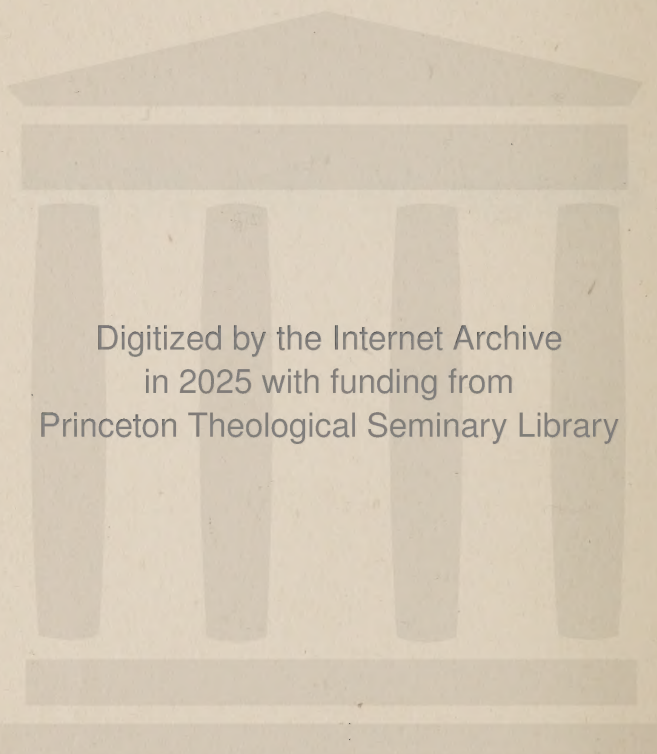
To Mrs. C. H. Greenleaf,
with the compliments
of Laura I. Smith
July 12th, 1944.

Your warm interest in
"Reaching the Tribes"
of French Indo-China
Jungles greatly inspires
and encourages our
hearts.

How "God" is written in the
Cambodian language:

"God so loved the world"
in the Prong tribes' language:
"Preh Kwang ran btiok nic
geh benih rang."

Gongs in the Night



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GONGS IN THE NIGHT

Reaching the Tribes of French Indo-China

by

MRS. GORDON H. SMITH



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GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

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FOREWORD

Darkness in the jungle. Through the still, hot air it comes to us—the haunting, reverberating beat of the gongs. A regular, melancholy sound, barbaric and wild. We sit listening. Listening. The gongs in the night. The tribesmen are trying to confound the demons who are working spells on their villages. Heathen darkness. Our hearts answer with throbs of awe and pity. We would hasten to them with the Light “whose dawning maketh all things new.”

MRS. GORDON H. SMITH

INTRODUCTION

This book is not only a series of interesting stories and incidents of life and work among tribespeople in a far-off land, but it is primarily the outflow of the compassionate love of Christ which caused Him to exhort His disciples, *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

Soon after the beginning of missionary work by the Christian and Missionary Alliance among the Annamese in French Indo-China in 1911, God in His providence began to prepare a young life in Canada to fit into His Great Commission program. Born of Christian parents on an Ontario farm, Laura Irene Ivory (now Mrs. Gordon H. Smith), the author of this book, turned with her whole heart to Christ at the age of ten and became at once a faithful witness among her school companions.

During the years of education and preparation that followed, God molded her life and led in His way. After graduating from the Toronto Bible College and completing a special course at the Moody Bible Institute, Mrs. Smith studied at the Missionary Training Institute at Nyack, New

York, where both she and Mr. Smith were accepted as candidates for foreign service under the Christian and Missionary Alliance in the vast pioneer field of French Indo-China. Soon the path of the author and her husband led to Cambodia, where contact with tribespeople stirred into flame their passion to reach these neglected souls.

The stories penned in the chapters which follow are so interesting that they fascinate the reader and cause the people of those faraway tribes—the Raday, Jarai and others—to relive their lives in our minds and hearts, and cause us also to rejoice with them in the gracious working of the Holy Spirit as they are led out of darkness into the light of Christ.

The author's purpose in presenting this book to an interested public goes deeper than mere entertainment. This volume and the companion volume by Mr. Smith, *The Blood Hunters*, are written to stir the hearts of God's people to a prompt and full obedience to the Great Commission on behalf of the scores of tribes in southern French Indo-China, and indeed throughout that great land, where the Alliance is responsible for the evangelization of more than 25,000,000 souls. It is the author's hope and our purpose that, when the present war is ended, a goodly number of new missionaries shall be ready and all necessary funds available, so that many other tribes shall hear—some for the first time—the glorious message so dear to our hearts.

New York, N. Y.

ALFRED C. SNEAD

Foreign Secretary,

The Christian and Missionary Alliance

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Where the Most Unexpected Happens	9
II. Language Study	15
III. Our Work at Kratié	17
IV. From Darkness to Light	20
Scene I: Darkness	20
Scene II: Light	23
V. The Pnong Tribespeople	26
VI. Our "Basket House"	31
VII. In the Raday Villages	36
VIII. Teeth-Breaking and Animal Sacrifices	41
IX. The Raday Respond to the Gospel	45
X. My First Trip by Elephant	54
XI. Leo, a Raday Tribesboy	65
XII. The First Raday Christmas	72
XIII. We Get a Tiger Skin	77
XIV. The Opening of Pleiku Province	80
XV. Faithful Touy—a Cambodian Christian	87
XVI. More Camping Experiences in Raday Villages ...	89
XVII. The Work Goes Forward	97

CHAPTER I

WHERE THE MOST UNEXPECTED HAPPENS

From the deck of the *Andre Lebon* we watched the hazy outlines of Cap St. Jacques take definite form. Far up the thickly wooded promontory the white finger of a lighthouse stood sole guard at this entrance to Southeastern Asia. It marks the gateway to France's most important colony—French Indo-China.

How strange it all seemed that day as our ship sailed slowly up the winding Saigon River to the port. The jungle forests rose in green walls on the riverside. The trees branched high, whiskered and bearded with air-plants, and beneath was a tangle of creepers, thorns and underbrush. We gazed with awe into the steaming, malignant depths watching for the jungle lords—the leopard and the python.

Then in the distance we spied Saigon, with its cathedral spires and factories, a miniature Paris out here in this thriving French colony.

On the quay were hundreds of white folk dressed in the latest French styles. But farther out were the yellow-skinned Annamese. The French crowd was waving to passengers on board. They were there to meet loved ones coming to the colony. Soon we saw through our field glasses a group of our missionary friends to meet us. At last we were off the ship—really and truly in the land of our adoption.

Then came our first rickshaw ride to the Mission Home, drawn by strong-muscled coolies with bell-shaped palm-leaf hats and slanted, surface-set eyes. Palm trees were waving like stately fans against a sky of incredible blue. On the streets were lovely doll-like girls in silk pantaloons and tunics, *slap-slapping* along in their heelless sandals.

At first it was very hard to become accustomed to the intense tropical heat. It seemed to lie on us like a heavy blan-

ket. "How do you ever stand this heat?" I asked some of the missionaries. "Heat?" they cried. "Why, this is pleasant weather! This is September, the cool season! Wait until the hot season comes in April and May."

My husband ordered cool suits of white linen immediately. They were to be made by an Annamese tailor and would cost about three dollars a suit in American money.

That night at supper I heard a noise like a smack and there right in front of my plate I saw a lizard about four inches long. He scurried over the tablecloth, jumped to the floor, climbed up the wall and ran across the ceiling where twenty more lizards were slithering about, upside down. I hoped that more would not forget themselves and drop down into my soup plate!

One of the missionaries caught a lizard but all he had left in his hand was the tail. The lizard would soon grow another one!

Out on the verandah was a grotesque insect with its arms folded as if in prayer. It is called a "praying mantis." But there are sharp little spikes inside those folded arms and we watched the mantis catch a moth in them and cut it to pieces.

We went on inland to the station where we were appointed to work—the city of Pnom Penh, capital of Cambodia. The Cambodian people are brown-skinned and of Hindu origin. They are entirely different from the yellow-skinned Annamese of the coast, who are cousins to the Chinese.

There were many problems for us to face that first year with the new language to master, the devitalizing climate and the strange customs of the people.

Housekeeping in this land is very different from housekeeping at home. The villainous charcoal stoves and crude tin ovens require a technique of their own. They would be scorned by housewives in the homeland.

It is customary for all white people in the tropics to have

native helpers and we, as missionaries, are thankful to have them so that we can be free to learn the language and help in the evangelistic work. But most of these native helpers came to us from their rice fields and had never seen inside a white man's house before. The "boy" would be dusting around the house, and, looking closer, I would see that he was dusting with the *dish towel*! And sometimes he would even use it for a handkerchief!

Once I went out to the kitchen to find the cook washing his feet in our dishpan!

In one house we had little swinging doors between the dining room and the pantry. One evening, at table, we were startled to see the boy crawling under the door on hands and knees, pushing our plates and food before him on the floor. He was afraid to open the swinging doors! When he served us our soup he saluted us by bending so far over the dish that his long, black hair dragged in it. Several times we came back to the house unexpectedly to find the cook and boy parading around in our clothes.

One day some little French children were coming to our house for a birthday party. The cook said he could make the candy for it, and as I was busy at the time with my language studies I left him alone. When he brought in the tray he had a patriotic-looking array of red, white and blue candy. I said, "I've seen red and white candy, but never *blue*. How did you make the candy blue?" He replied, "With bluing—clothes bluing."

At first it seemed hard to get a satisfactory cook. At last we found one who seemed to do very well and I settled down to my language study again. Then, a week later, our native teacher said, "I don't like to tell on your cook out there, but—he's a leper." "What," we cried, "a *leper*?"

We called a French doctor to examine him and he said, "Yes, he's in the first stages of leprosy, with swollen nose and ears and a mucous discharge which is contagious." In fact,

he told us that leprosy was more contagious in these early stages than later on. Of course we were not long in getting rid of this poor fellow and the doctor put him in a French hospital.

Tuberculosis, leprosy, smallpox, dysentery and cholera are very common here. We found that we must boil all our water for at least twenty minutes before drinking it, and one of my important tasks each day was to supervise the boiling of the day's supply of water.

Raw food should not be eaten for fear of dysentery or cholera germs in the soil, but because of the extreme heat one craves salads. Before eating lettuce, cabbage or tomatoes we had to soak them for at least twenty minutes in a solution of potassium permanganate. This purple disinfectant turns the lettuce and cabbage a dark brown and so the salads are not particularly appetizing.

We found we had to buy imported foods from Australia, Singapore or Hongkong in order to get a balanced diet. Canned milk, butter, cheese, cereals, wheat flour, baking powder and vanilla are all imported from these outside countries. Owing to the high French tariffs on these imports the cost of living is high in this colony. For some of these things we pay a price three or four times higher than at home.

We usually have one Annamese meal a week but we cannot digest them more often than that. The natives eat much rice and our children especially learned to love it. We soon learned how to cook it as the natives do. Several handfuls of rice are placed in a pot and barely covered with cold water. A charcoal fire is lighted, and as soon as the water begins to boil the coals are removed except for a few glowing embers. The rice is stirred several times at intervals and between stirrings is left tightly covered. After about thirty minutes it has completely absorbed all the water and is perfectly cooked, each grain separate. We eat many bowls of steaming rice at a native meal.

Then we also have bamboo shoots, black mushrooms (the children call them "kitten's ears"), red peppers, peanuts and bean sprouts. But the most necessary part of the Annamese meal is the "*nuoc mum*," the sauce made of fish fermented in brine. It has an odor like a glue factory but the salty tang is really tasty. At a native meal we dip all of our food into the "*nuoc mum*" before eating it.

Vegetables do not grow well in Indo-China. The soil and intense heat are not suited to the growing of potatoes, peas, carrots and beets, and so these have to be imported from China at a high price.

But the fruits of the country are delicious. Oranges grow in abundance, a whole bushel costing but a few cents. They are green-skinned but ripe and juicy inside. The bananas are also green-skinned but sweet and tender. Limes are found everywhere and there are many plantations of pineapples. A number of these tropical fruits are foreign to those in the homeland, but we find them very pleasing: the sapotilles, which we call the "caramel fruit"; the custard apples, which taste like a custard cream; and, of course, the delectable mangos. We pick these from great green umbrella trees and they are something between a pear and a peach, a fleshy, juicy, delightful fruit.

But perhaps the best fruit of all is the mangostine; in fact it is called the "fruit of paradise." It is shaped like an apple and has a thick wine-colored rind. We take a knife and cut through this rind all around, then pull the halves apart. In the center is a ball, oozing with juice and varying in color from snow-white to rose-flush. This juicy ball is so exquisite in taste that it is called "the nectar of the gods."

We enjoy the fruits, but the flowers are the most exciting—flaming flowers that the cold North never knows. For Christmas we did not have the spicy Christmas trees laden with snow but we had the symbols of Christmas cheer, the poinsettias—high, luxuriant trees of them in our garden.

One year I planted a branch of poinsettia in July and by Christmas time I had fifty flowers on it. The next Christmas I counted five hundred blooms on it and by the following Christmas it was too big a task to count the many hundreds of flowers on the great tree.

The gardens in the tropics look as though some artist had squeezed out all his tubes at once and splashed the canvas with the most glowing colors he could find. Over the arched gateways to most of the French homes are the flowering bougainvillea vines—immense masses of color, purple or rose-red, illuminating the landscape. There are hedges of hibiscus with their bell-shaped ruby-red flowers. Fiery canna beds are everywhere and there are bushes of gardenias, waxen, delicate and sweet-scented. The spiral flowers of the frangipani fall from the trees upon the lawns, spreading an odor of lilies.

Almost every pond has its surface all but solid with lotus flowers—the pink water lilies and their pads. There are avenues of the “flame of the forest” trees—burning parasols of orange-scarlet, and the feathery coconut palms tower over all.

The natives soon taught me how to plant the coconuts and I planted three of them in my garden. I first hung the nuts up in the air for several months until the little trees had commenced to grow. Then I dug a hole in the ground and at the bottom placed a handful of salt. I put the coconuts down on the salt and rammed earth around them. The three palms grew rapidly. But it was to be eight years before they would bear fruit.



CHAPTER II

LANGUAGE STUDY

Our first two years on the field were, of course, spent in language study. When I first saw the Cambodian language, I thought, "How shall I *ever* learn that!" It is written in characters taken from the Sanskrit and Pali of India. But these characters are made up of so many little loops and hooks, feet and heads, that they look more puzzling than Pitman's shorthand. However, after spending eight hours a day on the language with the help of a native teacher, one gradually becomes familiar with it, until at the end of two years it seems as easy as English.

We had to try five long, comprehensive examinations and if we did not make 80 per cent on the paper, it had to be done again. While studying for the last examination we had a great deal of sickness. Our little baby, Leslie, was very ill and I had to study most of the time with him on my lap. When my paper came back it was marked only 75 per cent; so I had to try again. We were compelled to take little Leslie to Hongkong, where he gradually came back to health in the change of climate. While there I wrote another paper on the final part of the language. This time I was sure I could get 100 per cent for I wrote twenty pages of closely-written foolscap, but I got only 89 per cent. I thought the examiner might have made it at least 90! But in the end we are very thankful for strict supervision in language work, as one cannot win the respect of the people unless he can speak clearly and well.

KRATIÉ

After studying the language for a year in Pnom Penh, we were stationed to work in Kratié, a little village on the Mekong River, two hundred miles inland, in the heart of pioneer territory.

From the first we found the French Government loathe to open Cambodia to the Gospel. Cambodia is a French protectorate. The Cambodians asked the French to protect their country against the Siamese on the west and the Annamese on the east, and also to protect their religion, Buddhism. The French say that they are pledged to protect the national religion of Cambodia. However, the Roman Catholics are authorized to preach everywhere and have a small Roman Catholic church even in Kratié.

The French Administrator told us that we must lock up all our Gospel literature. We did, for a week or so, and then gradually unlocked it again. Men and women came to us pleading for books with tears in their eyes. We found later, however, that most of them were spies sent by the Administrator, and were merely trying to see if we would give them the forbidden books.

We kept busily engaged in language study and of course could witness to our own native helpers in our home. We had Bible study classes for these two men twice a week, and soon they were greatly interested. Sometimes we would wake up at three o'clock in the morning to hear the cook or boy still reading his Bible at the top of his voice!

One day I showed our boy, Lie, a picture from *The Alliance Weekly* of an African being baptized. He cried, "I did not know that all the world knew about Jesus. Even the black men know. Why, I must be the last one!"

Sometimes when we tell them the glad story of a Saviour who came to redeem them from sin unto eternal life, they cry out, "Was it six months ago that Jesus died?" "No," we have to answer. "It was two thousand years ago."

And still, in just our own district, there are one million Cambodians and many thousands of tribespeople who have never yet heard one word of the Gospel. And we—one couple—are responsible for all of these!

CHAPTER III

OUR WORK AT KRATIÉ

A change of administrators in Kratié brought a new official who was very courteous to us; so we were encouraged to go on with our work.

Each evening we went out visiting the villages in the district when the people were home from their rice fields. We would drive the old model-T Ford into all sorts of places, leaving the main road to follow ox-cart tracks far into the forest wildernesses or along the river banks. Sometimes crowds of fifty or sixty natives would gather around our car, and we would give out tracts and Scripture portions and tell them the Gospel story, using object lessons, blackboard talks and picture rolls from Sunday schools at home.

For some time little children came to our house for children's meetings. I tried to arrange for them to come on specific days twice a week, but they could not remember one day from another, and so they came mostly every day! Often I would have a meeting in the morning and again in the afternoon. At times there would be a crowd of fifty. They would come in the door, bow their heads and salute with their hands together, saying, "Peace, happy, well, no?" This was their "How do you do?" I would seat them around on chairs or on the floor and then would open up the little folding organ and teach them to sing hymns translated into Cambodian. Soon they were singing lustily, "Jesus Loves Me," "O Happy Day" and many others. Then they would sit quietly as we unfolded picture rolls before them and told them the wonderful story of the Gospel.

As they left the house we gave them each a little Sunday school card, or a Bible story picture from a Scripture calendar, and they proudly took these home. As we visited the thatched huts in the village later we found these pictures

on the bamboo walls and the parents had heard the Gospel stories from the little children. "Jesus Loves Me" was becoming a well-known song in the village.

One evening I was playing the organ with a crowd of children about me singing, when suddenly one lad cried out, "*Sat pooh! Sat pooh!*" ("Snake! Snake!") and ran from the room, followed by all the children. You may be sure that I ran too. Out on the verandah I asked, "*Nuoo ay na?*" ("Where? Where?") They cried, "*Nooh! Nooh!*" ("There! There!") and pointed to the back of my chair! Sure enough, there was a little snake curled up very near where my neck had been! I shivered to think how he might have crawled down my back. We chased him off the chair and he slithered over the floor. With sticks and brooms we at last caught and killed him. They said it was a poisonous green banana snake which is very common in this region.

We had washed the wicker chairs that day—we do this very frequently as the natives who sit on them are none too clean. Then we left the chairs out on the grass in the sun for several hours. The hot tropical sun is an excellent disinfectant. But the little snake had crawled up from the grass inside the chair and later on in the evening, when he heard the music, he too came out to the meeting!

We had many visitors at our home—men, women and children—inquiring about the Gospel. Sometimes crowds of young men from the government school came in the evenings. But the Administrator warned us that we were allowed not more than twenty at a time in the house since we were not authorized to hold larger meetings. A policeman would stand outside our gate and count the crowd. After twenty had entered he would send the others away. The people wanted to come; they wanted to follow our true God and find satisfaction for their hungry hearts, but they feared the Buddhist priests and government officials greatly.

After a few months the little children no longer came to

our house. Meeting them on the streets, we asked why they did not come to see us and they replied that they had been beaten by the Buddhist priests for coming and listening to stories about Jesus Christ. The priests had threatened to put them into jail if they continued coming. So they were very much afraid.

It was indeed hard to be constantly under this ban. In spite of it we kept on witnessing in the villages as much as possible and we usually had visitors every day, but we finally were absolutely prohibited from going out to speak to any person. We were not to preach, visit or talk to anyone on the road, and we were not to have a chapel in our house. One day Mr. Smith said to the Administrator, "We may lose this battle, but we will win the war! God is our Captain. He is our Victor. We are on the Lord's side—the victorious side!"



CHAPTER IV

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Scene I: Darkness

We lived next door to a large Buddhist temple in Kratié, Cambodia. One day I heard a great clanging of cymbals and beating of gongs, accompanied by weird Cambodian chanting; so I hurried over to see what was taking place. Three novices were being ordained into the Buddhist priesthood and I went inside the temple to watch the ceremony.

The pagoda was gorgeous. The main room, thirty feet wide by sixty feet long, was paved with polished tiles in rich design. The high walls and ceilings were frescoed in brilliant colors with scenes from the life of Buddha and representations of heaven and hell. In the chancel were seven or eight gilded and silvered images of Buddha, some six feet high, the huge central idol sitting on a great golden lotus flower. Hundreds of candles were burning before the Buddhas, with offerings of fruit and flowers.

The place was packed with people. The men sat on the floor in one wing, while the women filled the other. All were dressed in their best silk *sampots* of purple, red or blue. In the nave of the temple saffron-robed priests, or *bonzes*, were lined on either side, while the novices and chief *bonze* sat before the altar.

I watched the complicated ceremony in which the young novices received their new yellow robes of office, their silver begging bowls for rice, and the red haversacks for their personal belongings, including a handkerchief, betel nuts, home-made cigars and a few pennies. The ceremony was accompanied with much bowing to the floor before the idols of Buddha and the chanting of prayers in syncopation led by a precentor. Everyone was solemn and earnest in his worship.

Standing on the threshold alone, watching the ceremony, I felt the great weight of this heathen religion upon me; these idols with their blank, idiotic look, were pitiful to behold, and the same blank look seemed to be reflected in the faces of the Buddhist priest advisers. They have no moral sense; they know no sense of sin and feel no need of a Saviour. They do not teach the people to pray for a clean heart, but for good luck, riches and many sons. They chant their prayers, which are from the mass-book of Buddhism—a dead letter to them, for it is written in Sanskrit or Pali, which they can no more decipher than fly! They chant mere sounds, totally devoid of sense.

Yet it is very hard to lead these people to see the truth and to forsake the ways of their ancestors. Humanly speaking, it is impossible. This age-old religion is imbedded in the hearts and lives of the people; these temples are everywhere; these bands of Buddhist priests trail the flame of their yellow robes over all the land. The night has been deep, and black, and long, but now we see a little light breaking into the darkness.

One afternoon we got into the old model-T Ford and sped out on the excellent French colonial highway from Kratié along the Mekong River. It is a beautiful road lined with banana trees, coconut palms and graceful bamboo. Little thatched huts on stilts hide among the foliage. Natives are working in their sugar cane and rice fields and languid water buffaloes sleep in the mud. Jungle land stretches out into the distance, teeming with wild life.

After driving about twelve miles we stopped at a little village. A crowd of natives were near, pounding with great bamboo sticks in the grass, trying to catch a huge snake, but it escaped in the tall grasses.

Natives flocked out of their huts to meet us—strange-looking people with betel-stained teeth and mouths dripping with the blood-red betel juice. Their hair was close-cropped,

men and women alike. They all wore the *sampot*, which is a piece of cloth caught up at the back and knotted at the belt.

As we took our little folding organ out of the car, the natives danced excitedly about. "Truly, the teacher has brought a box! Truly! Truly!" We opened it and began to play, and they cried, "The box has music in it!" Some of them ran into a hut and brought out a straw mat. Such a wonderful box must not sit on the ground with ants crawling over it! They gathered eagerly around as we played and sang for them in Cambodian, "Jesus Loves Me."

"What!" they cried, "a God who loves us? We are so afraid of our gods. We are always offering them bowls of rice and flowers. A God that loves us enough to come to earth and *die for us!*" They listened, staring with mouths open, as we told them the Old, Old Story—so old to us, but so new to them.

On a bank near by a dear old man was sitting, shaking his head and murmuring over and over, "My heart is sad. I have no peace." We asked, "Who is he?" The natives replied, "He was a Buddhist priest for thirty years. He is a doctor in our religion, a holy man." But he kept rocking back and forth, saying, "I'm so afraid of hell! I'm so afraid to die! I have no peace. My heart is sad." So we went to him with the Bible, and told him the way of life. He gazed up at us puzzled, trying to understand. "The true God? The only way?" Why, he thought he knew about God and the way—he had been studying all these years. We left him pondering over the Book translated into the characters of his language, praying that God would enlighten his dark mind.

The sun was sinking and the sky was a blaze of color. It was now time for the Cambodian women to prepare their evening rice in tiny cook pots over little open charcoal fires. One man named Touy gathered a bunch of white gardenias growing wild on a bush near by and, bowing low, presented

it to us. Another ran up into his little house on stilts and brought us a bowl of rice with some fresh eggs on top, which he gave to us. These were their love offerings. They said they loved us, and asked us to come again soon and tell them more of the wonderful Story.

This is the true story of our first visit to Kbal Chooa, the little village which later became Christian.

Scene II: Light

One morning about two months after our first visit to Kbal Chooa, we were sitting on the verandah of our bungalow studying, when we saw a cavalcade of eight bicycles coming down the road. They turned into our gate and we saw that they were men from Kbal Chooa. But their faces were very sad. "What is the matter?" we asked, and they replied, "We are called in today to go to court." "To court?" we cried. "What have you done?" "Why," they answered, "we have given up Buddhism and are following Jesus Christ, the true God, and the government has heard of it and now we have to appear before the Cambodian Governor of the Province and the Administrator of France."

"But," we said, "they may put you in prison; they may beat you, kick you, feed you only rice and water, while they make you crack stones all day to build the new roads!" "Yes, we know," they answered. "Aren't you afraid?" we asked. "Yes, we're so afraid!" they said. "But, you are *willing* to go?" "Oh, yes!" they cried. "Since this new-found Saviour has come into our hearts, He has brought us such light and peace that we would rather go to prison than give Him up. We would *die* before we would give up our Lord!"

Then we were indeed filled with joy to hear this confession of faith. We had not known before that they were really going to be Christians, but now they told us they began to believe the very first day they heard the wonderful message

of salvation—that very first day we visited them. We could not help them against the government, being strangers in the land; but we could pray for them all that day. Our native evangelist was in prison for three months at this time, simply for preaching the Gospel, and was undergoing great persecution at the hands of the jailers and policemen.

The eight men went into court and gave a splendid witness before the Cambodian officials and the French Administrator, who must have been interested in their testimony, for they kept them at it all day! They did not put them in prison, for which we thanked God, but sent them away with threats and warnings that they would be watched by spies and police at all times.

The Christians at Kbal Chooa endured various persecutions for two years, remaining steadfast and true to the faith, reading their Bibles and praying daily and growing in grace. We went out each Sunday and had meetings with them in their leader Touy's little thatched hut on stilts. Then we felt the time was ripe for them to be baptized and that is the second scene in this gripping drama depicting the wondrous transition from darkness to light.

We drove out again to Kbal Chooa early one Sunday morning. It was springtime and the road was lined with orange and pomelo blossoms and areca-palm bloom. The air was rich with tropical fragrance. When we reached the village the Christians came out to meet us—not strange men and women now, but people with shining faces. We gathered together in one of the huts on stilts and sang the hymns of redemption. They know them now—"Jesus Loves Me," "On Christ, the Solid Rock, I Stand," "O Happy Day."

Then we went down to the river bank and twenty Cambodians—one old grandfather, eight other men, six women and five children—were solemnly baptized, signifying their passing from the old life of false worship and sin into the new life of fellowship with the Saviour. It was a wonderful serv-

ice. As Mr. Smith led the old grandfather into the water, he said, "*Ta* (grandfather), do you really believe on God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son, and on the Holy Ghost?"

Old *Ta* knew that spies might be on the bank listening and watching and that he might have to go to prison for this, but he lifted up his right arm and shouted at the top of his voice, "I do believe, *truly!*" How we thrilled with joy at that bold confession.

Then we all went back to the little hut and sang more praises to God and joyfully partook together of the Lord's Supper. And I thought, "What a contrast there is between this service and the ceremony I watched in the Buddhist temple!" Here we were not bowing down to stupid, idiotic idols, but to the living Lord of Glory. We were not chanting prayers and songs in a dead language that had no meaning to us, but we were communing from our hearts with a personal Saviour. Truly, the first ceremony was as "darkness" but now "Light" was breaking in. These were our first Christians in Northeastern Cambodia—the nucleus of the living Church of Christ in this great district. We were encouraged to see these believers standing true amid much persecution, daily going on with the Lord in Bible-reading, prayer and witnessing to others. The Christians had wonderful answers to prayer and would come fifteen miles on their bicycles to tell us about them.

Two weeks after the baptismal service, the old grandfather died, firmly trusting in Jesus Christ, his Lord. He was given a Christian burial and was our first Cambodian Christian to go to heaven. How happy we are that he is safe in the arms of Jesus.

CHAPTER V

THE PNONG TRIBESPEOPLE

Along the borders of our Kratié district live the Pnong tribespeople, semisavage aborigines of the jungle forests. In Indo-China there are hundreds of thousands of wild tribespeople driven back into the great hinterland of the country by the Annamese on the south and east, the Cambodians on the west and the Laosians on the north. Large sections of the map of the interior of Indo-China are still white and the French write over these, "*tribus insoumis*" (unsubdued, unconquered tribes).

We saw these Pnong tribespeople walking past our house in single file day after day. They had come a far journey out of their forests to visit the Kratié market where they barter their rice, deer skins and horns for salt, beads and coils of copper for bracelets. Their red-bronze bodies are naked except for a loincloth. Their long black hair is rolled into a bun at the back and tied with a bit of red rag. They wear large iron neck rings and the women wind brass wire six inches or more around their arms and legs. Their ear lobes are pierced and stretched to receive great plugs of ivory.

What a tremendous challenge they were to us, for they had never yet heard one word of the Gospel! Mr. Smith visited among their encampments, eager to learn their strange, primitive language, as yet unwritten. He finally secured an old Pnong called Mnhyoit as a "teacher." This old tribesman understood the Cambodian language and through this we could learn his own.

So my husband brought him home. Mnhyoit had never been in a white man's house before. We offered him a chair. "Oh, no!" He would not sit on that chair. He had never seen one before. "It might break." "No, no," we assured him as

we persuaded him to sit down and try it. He sat on the very edge and then jumped up. "It's too hard," he said. He would rather squat down on his haunches. The tribespeople will sit that way for hours.

We commenced learning his language. My husband asked him, "What is the word for hand?—for foot?" Mnhyoit answered, "What do you want to know all that for?"

"We want to learn your language. We want to get it written down and some day we'll give you God's Word in Pnong."

"My language!" he laughed. "Why, my language is so easy you'll learn it in two weeks." Well, it took us two years.

We would ask him the word for "to save." Mnhyoit would answer, "We have no word."

"But," we would explain, "supposing a pig fell into a well and you ran and pulled him out. What would you say for that?"

"We pulled him out."

"But, no," we would say, "can't you say in one word that you rescued him?"

Mnhyoit, too lazy to think, would yawn, "Oh, we have no word."

We would then ask, "Haven't you a word like 'deliver'?"

"No," he would reply. "We Pnongs know nothing but to cut and stab, grow rice and die."

We would ask him, "What is the word for 'lost'?" He would mumble, "*Khyuot*."

We would then ask him to repeat it over again as we must get it spelled correctly.

He would mutter, "*Khyuot*." Again we would question him. Perhaps we would have to beg him to say it many times before we would hear it correctly.

"Oh, you want to know too much," Mnhyoit would say, and off he would go, disgruntled.

We would run after him and pat him soothingly on the shoulder, saying, "All right, Mnhyoit, we won't ask you that

word any more today. Just come back and we'll talk about something else that interests you."

"Oh," he would grumble, "my throat is so dry!" He wanted some rice alcohol. These tribespeople are great drinkers of this rank rice beer. We told him that the drink was very bad for him, but that I would bring him a cup of tea.

"Try this," I would say, "this will refresh you so you can go on teaching us." After tasting it, he would spit it all out on the floor, emphasizing his declaration that he did not like the beverage.

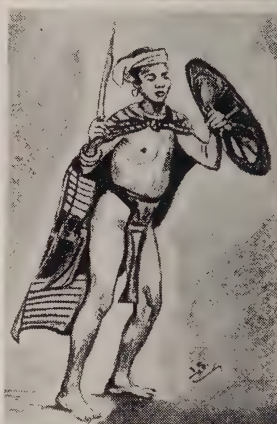
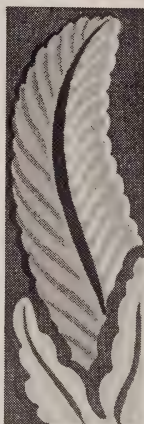
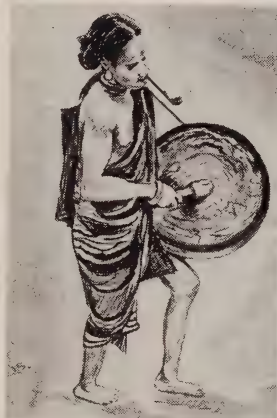
We had a great time learning the Pnong language with old Mnhyoit. My husband has a great deal of patience and a good ear for languages, so he finally acquired a vocabulary, put it into a dictionary and then made a grammar and wrote a Gospel Summary in the Pnong language.

One day we heard that about twenty-five miles out from our village there was an encampment of one hundred Pnongs. They had come out of the dense jungles, a distance of a hundred miles, by elephant and ox-cart to pay their taxes to the government. Gradually, by slow degrees, the French Government is bringing this tribe into subjection. The Administrator of the Province had called these men out and this was the first time that many of them had ever seen a white man. What an opportunity this was for us to go to them with the Gospel! Seldom can one see so many together at once, for they live hidden away in the fathomless forests, their little villages scattered far apart. They are making their last stand against encroaching civilization. Roads are being built through their country at great cost of life. Recently, the fifth or sixth French officer in charge of the road-building was murdered—hacked to pieces by gangs of Pnongs.

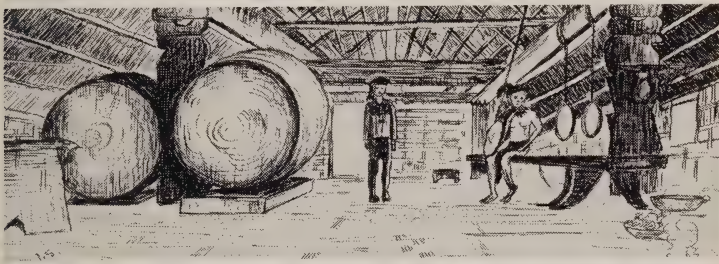
Reprisals were made for this man's life by the French. Airplanes flew over the forest and dropped bombs down on



Upper left: Mrs. Smith. Upper right: Basket house interior. Center left: Stanley and a native chief. Center right: Water buffalo. Lower: Thatched huts on stilts.



Upper left: Mrs. Smith and trailer. Upper right: Gong players and alcohol jars. Center left: Gong player. Center right: Tribesman with shield. Lower: Sacrifice of a buffalo.



Upper: Native gong players. Second from top: Longhouse interior. Third row left: After the hunt. Third row right: Baptism of H'Bhi and fifteen other Christians. Lower: Coming to church by elephant.



Upper: Lake scene. Center left: The Smith family. Center right: A Pnong woman. Lower left: Raday women sewing. Lower right: Baptismal scene.

many villages. Armored cars went down the new roads and shot into the forests.

The next officer in charge of the road-building augmented his troops to two hundred Cambodiân soldiers to insure future safety for himself.

We go out to the encampment. Ah, what a picture—one hundred Pnongs around their campfires! They are surprised and pleased to see white people who can speak their language. We tell them the Gospel story, using pictures and blackboard charts, and give each of them a picture illustrating a scene from the life of Christ. The Story is so new, so strange to them. But as they go back to their jungle homes they will talk together over their fires of the white man who spoke to them in their own language and told them stories of a "God who died for them."

On the way home we stop in the cool of the evening to rest awhile by the river. The water in the Mekong is low in the dry season, leaving great stretches of smooth sand on the shore. We walk far out on the "pink beach" to the water's edge. The "tiny missionaries" want to go swimming. What joy as they scamper about in the soft sand! There is a miracle of changing colors in the sunset sky. As Douglas runs gaily through the water kicking out his toes, clouds of little silver flying fish rise ahead of him, skimming over the water. He looks like a little elf child playing with fairy fish in the sunset. But those fish tickle baby Leslie's legs, and he crawls out of the water to sit on the sand beside Mama.

The sky and water now are all turned to lavender—an enchanted orchid world. Far out, a little native junk with a ribbed sail drifts, reflected in the translucence.

Over in the east the full moon is rising, a ball of heavy red.

The jungle throbs. From the temples come the beat of the tom-toms and the weird Cambodian chanting. Far out in the

forest the savages are calling wildly to their spirits as they offer up bloody sacrifices.

The challenge fires us! "We have hard work to do and loads to lift." Who will face the struggle with us? Who will help us bring the Light in this dark land?



CHAPTER VI

OUR "BASKET HOUSE"

After four and one-half years in Kratié, Cambodia, a new door swung open for us to push on into a more strategic center for work among the tribespeople. Something must be done for these unnumbered tribes in the interior of Indo-China still waiting for the Gospel. No missionary as yet had ever reached them. "No cross had yet been lifted high" over these vast jungles.

A new road had just been opened through the forests and mountains as far as Banmethuot on the high Darlac Plateau of Southern Annam, 250 miles away from Kratié. Much of this new road runs through the unsubdued territory of the Pnong tribes and the Mnong Prehs, a tribe somewhat related to the Pnongs. We followed this road and moved into Banmethuot, a center for the great Raday, Bih, Mnong and Jarai tribes. Even the Roman Catholic priests, after eighty years of work in Indo-China, have not yet entered here.

When we arrived in this great jungle country we felt overwhelmed by the immensity of our task—to announce the Word of God to these thousands of poor heathen so full of wrong and evil. We cried out, "Oh, Lord! how shall we begin—we, so weak and helpless—how shall we begin to conquer this evil?"

Of ourselves we could do nothing. But the Lord says, "Go and tell," and He will meet us as we obey Him.

We must first learn the language of the Raday tribespeople—the largest and most intelligent tribe on the Darlac Plateau. I thought, "My, do I have to learn *another* language!" My head was whirling now with all the languages we had to speak. Before going out to Indo-China we had to go to France for one year to study French, as English is not

spoken in the French colony. Next we had learned the difficult Cambodian character language; then the Pnong tribe's language.

One day I was talking to a French lady and I noticed she kept smiling and nodding and I thought, "Why is she smiling? I'm not saying anything to make her smile." Then she said, "What is the language you are talking? I can't understand one word of it!" I suddenly realized I was talking to her in Cambodian and I had thought I was speaking French! Each time we speak to the different people out in Indo-China we must be sure that we turn the "language dial" in our heads.

The French had already made a vocabulary of the Raday language, and so it was not so hard to learn as the Pnong. In eight months' time Mr. Smith had translated and printed a Gospel Summary in Raday, the first book the Raday tribespeople had ever had in their language. This was soon followed by a translation of Mark's Gospel.

We were obliged to stay in the "Hunter's Hotel" for the first five months as there are few places to rent in Banmethuot. Later we built a little native house of our own.

What a quaint "doll's house" it was! In three weeks' time it was built, and not a nail was in it; it was tied together with rattan. The house was on stilts, four feet from the ground, to protect from snakes, beasts and floods. The roof was a thick thatch made from dried thatch grass and piled on eight inches deep, firmly pressed and held down with bamboo slats tied by rattan strings. The floor was made of bamboo, slit and woven in a basket design. It was doubly covered with this woven bamboo to make it stronger and had an even design, like a large rug in crisscross pattern. The walls were made from great double sheets of this woven bamboo in the same pattern as the floor. Our house looked just like a big basket with a lid of thatch!

The windows were cut-out squares in the walls, without

any glass. We closed them with bamboo shutters that slid quite smoothly back and forth on poles.

We had a large living room and dining room combined for the central room. The bedrooms were off that, on either side.

In a Chinese store I found some gay cretonne with sprigs of sweet peas all over it. So I made frilly, tie-back curtains for the windows and long curtains for the doors into the bedrooms. The sweet peas seemed to match our basket house. There were tiger and leopard skins on our bamboo floor and the bookshelves and furniture were all of rustic bamboo. With gay cushions here and there and plenty of books, we were quite cosy.

The children's room was furnished with milk-box cases covered with blue and white cretonne. Milk cases with shelves nailed in made fine cupboards for their books and toys.

My dressing table was also made of milk cases, hidden under pleated cretonne, with a mirror hung above it. My husband's chiffonier was four or five shelves of bamboo in the corner of the room with a shirred curtain across them.

Our bathroom was a triumph. A French lady with whom I exchanged English lessons for instruction in conversational French, lent us a regular white porcelain bathtub, and my husband constructed the plumbing from long hollow bamboo pipes. And so our little shack boasted a bath!

Our kitchen, separate from the house, had milk-case cupboards and a bamboo table. The cook made a nest over the table in which the hen could lay her daily egg, which was very convenient, especially when once or twice she laid it right on the table! Leslie enjoys the memory of the day when this hen walked right up the steps into our native house and laid an egg in his high chair. This hen was very tame and a prized pet of the children.

We prayed every day that our little house would not catch

fire, for our "basket" would go up like paper and be destroyed in five minutes. We would barely have time to grab the children and get out ourselves, and could not hope to save our books. We installed electric light, which made our home safer.

When Mr. Smith was away on trips he felt anxious about us, and could hardly make the old car go fast enough on his return to see if the house were still standing. For my part, being left alone for weeks at a time with little children was also rather hard. It was very easy to imagine all sorts of things. I would find myself watching one of the windows and I could almost see the "lid" pushed along on the pole from the outside and a wild, savage face peering in at me!

These tribes have a dreadful way of killing an enemy. They steal up under his house at night with their long spears and after finding out where the enemy is sleeping, they quickly spear him through the bamboo floor. I would fancy that I heard people creeping under the house and would almost watch for a spear to come up through the floor. Then I would hear our old car chugging down the road, the horn tooting out such a cheery greeting. What a relief and joy. My husband was home again! Of course God was caring for us every moment and it was wrong to have these fancies.

We had a wonderful answer to prayer in regard to the building of this little house. We had a large number of native coolies working on the house for three weeks and when it was finished we wired the chairman of the field for the money to pay them. He wired back that at the moment the treasury was empty and he could not send us anything for some time. We wondered what to do as the natives would not understand. We were new in the place and they might think us dishonest. Our reputation would be at stake.

We were praying fervently about the matter, when we saw a man from the post office coming to our door waving a paper in his hand. It was a money order from home to the amount

of thirty dollars—the exact sum needed for paying the coolies! We did not know who had sent it but it did not take Mr. Smith long to cash it, line up the coolies and pay them off. A few days later the explanation came. A dear saint of God in Owen Sound, Canada, was sitting in Sunday school one afternoon, when a voice seemed to say to her suddenly, "Send Mr. and Mrs. Smith thirty dollars." She obeyed this word immediately, and the money came to us just at the moment when it was so needed. How we praised God for this wonderful evidence of His care for us!



CHAPTER VII

IN THE RADAY VILLAGES

We studied the Raday language in the daytime and visited the villages in the evening when the people returned from their rice fields. We found we had 650 villages in our parish around Banmethuot in the Province of the Darlac. We could take the provinces to the north, the south, the east and the west for our parish too, for no missionaries were working in them and each of those provinces would have many hundreds of villages. But they are too large a territory for one missionary couple. So we began with the Raday villages.

The French are good colonizers and even in this wild jungle country we can drive for hundreds of miles on good highways. The French subdue these tribes by going into the forests with soldiers and forcing the people to come out and break stones for the highways. When the roads are built the French bring in civilization—schools, hospitals and good administration—to these tribespeople. The missionary can follow the highways also, bringing the precious light of the Gospel into the darkness.

The tribespeople fear the French and the good roads, and so they hide their villages far away in the jungles. But when we see a wheel track or barefoot trail leading off the road, we drive over it through tall cane grass, tangles of underbrush, creepers, thorns and great ant-hills until we reach the native villages. A Ford can bump over anything!

How picturesque are the Raday villages! These people build long bamboo houses on high wooden stilts, some of which are ten feet from the ground. Usually the houses are two hundred feet in length but some are five hundred feet long! We go up a notched pole stairway to a log verandah and when we look in through the front door we can hardly

see the back door—it is five hundred feet away, at the end of a long room all made of bamboo. The floor is of woven bamboo that springs up and down like a teeter when you walk on it. The walls are made of woven bamboo and the roof is a thick thatch of grass. The houses are rustic and cool inside. Perhaps forty people live in one of these long-houses.

Each of the villages has about sixty longhouses clustered on the bank of a stream. They are surrounded by dark green jungle forests and backed by blue and purple hills. The reddish-brown people come out to meet us—the men naked except for a loincloth; the women wearing a wrap-around skirt. They have long black hair, deep-set eyes, wide noses and huge mouths. These natives usually have a little Raday axe hooked over their left shoulders and in the other hand they carry a long spear.

When we see fifty or sixty of these wild men coming towards us with their hatchets and spears, we sometimes draw back and wonder, "What is going to happen to us?" But they do not come after us with their spears. The Raday tribesmen carry these to protect themselves, for this is tiger country—and leopard, wild elephant, gaur and wild boar country. The jungle in this region teems with wild life. The natives are often caught by tigers and leopards. In fact they fear the tiger so much that they will not speak his name; they believe the tiger is a god who hears his name no matter how far away he may be.

We greet the people with, "*Jak aseï mlei mo'h?*" ("How do you do?") and, surprised, they reply, "Why, you can speak our language!"

"Yes," we tell them. "We have come to talk to you about God, the Chief of the Skies." (This is their title for God.)

"Oh," they cry, "tell us about Him, teacher. Bring us light. We don't know anything about God, the Chief of the Skies."

They listen quietly, eagerly while we tell them of how God

made the heaven and earth; how He made all mankind; and how He loves all mankind.

"What," they exclaim, "a God who loves us enough to send His only Son to die for us!"

The natives are exceedingly picturesque. Perhaps fifteen or twenty of them will come out onto the long verandah of poles protruding from one of the longhouses. It is on high columns like the rest of the house. The jungle dwellers stand poised there, long spears in hand, towering bronze against the sunset sky. Their only clothing is a blue and scarlet loincloth; and their iron neck ring, hunting knives and long spears add to their strange—somewhat frightening—appearance. They stand or crouch there a long time, very still, listening to the Story. This is indeed a picture to remember.

After preaching until our throats are hoarse, we have to leave the village. But before we go we look for someone who can read. The French have a government school at Banmethuot and they are forcing each village to send in at least one child to the school. So perhaps we find that the chief's son, a lad ten or twelve years old, can read fluently. We give him our Gospel Summary, an attractive Bible primer with pictures, and as we drive away we look back to see another picture.

The little lad, his slim bronze body naked except for the loincloth, has gone over to an open fire to get light for reading his book. All around him are gathered the forest people, crouching, listening, as the boy in his clear, childish treble voice is reading. *A little child shall lead them* in the reading of the Scriptures. This is a picture that thrills us! With hope and joy we watch the planting of the seed in these poor villages that have waited so long for the Gospel.

But we cannot go into one of these villages and preach for several hours and then leave it. The old Devil has had his lair out here all through the centuries. Often we feel

that we have walked right into his den. Does the Devil want God's garden to grow out here now? When he sees the seed of the Word begin to grow in the villages, do you not think he will try to pull the little plants out and trample them underfoot and destroy them? Oh, yes! the enemy always strives to do that.

So we must camp in these villages for a week at a time and preach and preach, and pray and pray, and water the seed with our tears. Then we shall see the grain spring up, take strong root and grow into healthy plants.

It is hard to camp in the longhouses of the tribespeople, especially with our children, for these dwellings are filthy and filled with disease germs. So my husband said, "We'll have to build a trailer."

"Why," I cried, "how would you ever build a trailer? You are no carpenter."

There were no trailers to be found in Indo-China.

"Look here," my husband said, and he showed me a copy of the *Popular Mechanics* magazine. I don't know how it got out to Indo-China, but in it was a picture of a trailer, streamlined and silver. My husband said, "I'm going to build that."

I exclaimed, "How will you ever build a *streamlined* trailer?" My husband replied, "A missionary tries anything."

So he went down to the port city of Saigon and found an old Citroen chassis in a garage there. Then he got some French wallboard and other materials—not so suitable as the materials with which you in America build trailers—and he started to make his trailer. He found a Chinese carpenter to help him. The Chinese are very good carpenters but this chap had just come down from China and could not speak any of the languages my husband speaks; nor did my husband know one word of Chinese. So they built the trailer on two Annamese words. All day long I would hear those two words. My husband would take a stick and measuring it

would say, "*Cai nay*," meaning "This way, that way." The Chinaman always answered back, "*Cum duoc*"—"Can't be done!"

His scoffing comment on everything my husband showed him was, "It can't be done"—a streamlined trailer! a house on wheels! He had never seen nor heard of such a thing before!

However in three months' time it was done. I could hardly believe my eyes! There it stood, a streamlined trailer just like the picture; and we painted it silver with aluminum paint. We hitched it behind our Ford car; it was a little too tall, a little too top-heavy, but we pulled it through the tall cane grass and over the huge ant-hills; it swayed and lurched, but the guardian angels held it up.

I cannot tell you of anything more romantic than to pull a trailer in under a gigantic clump of bamboo in a native village. The great green plumes bend down all around the trailer and in the daytime it is shady and cool. At night the bamboo clump rattles and squeaks as the giant stems rub each other in the wind and all the feathery plumes rustle. It is the loveliest music you ever heard!

Early in the morning we are awakened by a *scratch, scratch, scratch*, on the outside of the trailer, and we hear some natives say, "Ah, it isn't silver after all!"

They thought the "house on wheels" was covered with silver—not mere aluminum paint.



CHAPTER VIII

TEETH-BREAKING AND ANIMAL SACRIFICES

As we camped among the villages we saw something of the dark, pagan ways of these poor tribespeople.

One dreadful custom they have weighs heavily upon our hearts. When the children have their second teeth at the ages of twelve or fourteen, they put the child—boy or girl—down on the ground. Four people hold the child there forcefully. They place stones behind the front teeth, top and bottom, take the hatchet that always hangs over the left shoulder and hack out his teeth to the gums! The child screams with the awful pain; the blood flows and the mouth swells up. We know what it is like when one tooth nerve is opened. When all the nerves are opened, especially in the sensitive front teeth, the pain must be excruciating. When the barbarous deed is finished, the child rushes off into the forest like a little wounded animal. It takes several days for the nerves of the teeth to die. Then they get a black lacquer from a certain tree, heat it in the fire and rub this over the broken teeth. From then on the child has little black stumps for front teeth.

All through Indo-China the tribespeople cut off their top teeth. Some tribes file the lower teeth to sharp points.

We cry out to them, "Why do you do this awful thing?"

They answer, "Long ago the gods broke off their teeth on some rice that was offered to them. They found out that they were much better looking with their teeth broken off. So if we want to please the gods we must break off our teeth too. If we do not do this to please the gods we won't have good crops or good health. We, too, think we are much better looking with our teeth broken and lacquered black. Any dog or pig can have long white teeth."

If they do not break off their teeth they are not considered

brave, true tribesmen. They are slandered by others in the tribe and are called cowards and poltroons.

When the light of the Gospel comes in, these dark, ignorant ways go out and today our Christians say they will never cut off their children's teeth. The French school at Banmethuot has forbidden the children who attend there to cut off their teeth. Let us have compassionate, good Samaritan hearts and "speed the Light" out to these benighted tribes.

Their religion consists of a series of awful practices. These tribespeople do not bow down before idols as so many of the Orientals do, but their religion is a sacrifice of animals. When they are sick, or when they want rain for their crops; when they fear the thunder and lightning; when they want the spirits to help them in any way, they call in a sorcerer. Every village has a sorcerer. He tells them what animals they must sacrifice to appease the spirits: if they are rich, two water buffaloes, or cows, or pigs or dogs; if they are very poor, a chicken will do. Any animal may be offered but the cat. The thing so terrible about these sacrifices is that the more the animal suffers and cries out, the longer it takes for it to die, the more successfully the spirits are appeased. So this is a frightful thing. I have cried many tears over these poor animals.

These sacrifices go on almost daily in the villages. The natives take out a water buffalo. They fear his great, flaring horns, and so they tie him up well by the neck to a post. Still afraid of him, they come behind him with hatchets hooked over their shoulders and they hamstring him—cut the tendons at his knees. The poor beast slumps down, and as he lumbers around on broken, bleeding stumps of legs, the tribesmen dance wildly about him throwing their spears into his sides, cutting at him, hacking him, stabbing him. They take their time about it as the more the animal is tortured the more the spirits will be pleased.

They always have a long row of glazed brown jars of rice alcohol at these sacrifices. They siphon the alcohol out of the jars with hollow bamboo stems. Everybody drinks—men, women and children. The women turn around with their little babies slung on their backs and the babies too drink alcohol from the syphons.

The sacrifice is accompanied by the beating of the Raday gongs—ten or twelve brass discs varying in sizes from three feet in diameter to one foot. The young lads of the village clang these in rythmic beats, two long notes and three short ones—always the same few bars repeatedly. It is the oldest music of the earth, unutterably wild and strange, and when we hear it rolling out from the forest we know that one of these terrible sacrifices is being made.

So with the beating of the gongs and the drinking of the alcohol they dance around the animal and slowly spear and stab him to death. As he is dying they catch his lifeblood. They want to get the very blood that comes from his heart. So they take a hollow bamboo tube and bore this into the place where they think the heart is and catch the blood in bowls. They then take this blood to the person who is sick and sprinkle it all over his arms and legs. They sprinkle it over their doorposts; over the roof-beams of their houses; over their drums and gongs and alcohol jars.

Then, holding up their bloody spears and hatchets, they cry, "Oh, spirits of the North, the South, the East, the West; spirits of the trees, the rivers, the rocks, the hills; spirits big and little—come, see the blood of this animal and bring us good health, and good crops and good luck!"

When we hear the old sorcerer chanting out this long prayer we get up on a place higher than the sorcerer and we cry out, "No! No!—poor people, no! God does not want the blood of this animal. God does not want the animals to suffer like this. Two thousand years ago, God, the Chief of the Skies, sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, down to this

earth and He suffered and died. His body was broken on Calvary's Cross as a sacrifice for us and His blood was spilled for us. His blood will bring you comfort, and peace, and joy, and eternal life!"

They listen and say, "That's a wonderful Story. Of course the blood of the Son of the Chief of the Skies would be better than the blood of our animals. It would be better than the blood of our buffaloes or even our elephants. Do you mean to say we don't have to kill our animals for sacrifices any more? We can sell them and get money for them?"

"But," they ponder, "no one ever told us this Story before. The French never told us. And who are you? You are a strange couple. You are not even French. You are foreigners from some country called "*Buon Amerique*" ("the village of America"). Perhaps you are telling us a lie. If we should follow your way and forsake the customs of our ancestors the spirits might become angry with us. Then our crops would fail, and calamity would come; we'd all get sick and die."

In this land there is much superstition and prejudice. We must keep on patiently, earnestly preaching the Story.

How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? They seek peace by the blood of buffaloes and calves. They know not His great peace through the blood of his cross.

O God, open our eyes upon this profound night of these millions lost. And as we hear their cries as they die in the dark, without God, without hope, "Stir us, oh, stir us! Stir till Thy blood-red banner be unfurled" over this dark heathen land.

CHAPTER IX

THE RADAY RESPOND TO THE GOSPEL

What a day of victory it was when the French Government granted us authorization to build a chapel for the Raday in Banmethuot! This first church for the tribespeople was built of bamboo and roofed with thatch in the same style as the Raday longhouses. It was called "*Sang Aê Diê*" ("The House of God, the Chief of the Skies").

The long community room of the first section served as a chapel; we had a wooden pulpit on a platform, and rows of benches for the Raday to sit on. We put in electric lights and had a little folding organ. Behind this were small rooms partitioned off with bamboo where visiting tribespeople could stay overnight and cook their rice on little open clay fireboxes.

When we opened the chapel and dedicated it to the Lord we did not expect to have a meeting in it every night, but the tribespeople kept coming in interested crowds, and so for four and one-half years the Word was preached in this hallowed place nightly.

Mr. Smith translated sixty hymns into the Raday language and it was a wonderful thrill to hear at last the voices of the Raday tribe's children and young people singing "Jesus Loves Me" and "Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine."

Our first fruits among the Raday tribe were four young men who took their stand for Christ, testifying that they had cut clean from sacrificing to the spirits, rice alcohol drinking and all the age-old Raday customs and sins. Soon four others took the same splendid stand for Christ. This time a young woman was among the number, joining her husband in following Christ.

So there were eight Raday in our first baptismal service in the river near the chapel, and what a blessed time of fellow-

ship we had as we all gathered around the Lord's table in the bamboo chapel.

We saw it was very important to get a Bible school started to train some of the tribespeople themselves to become preachers of the Gospel.

Four of our young men began to come each morning to our house for Bible study. These were the first members of our Raday Bible school. That school has grown now to nine men and five of their wives. We had to teach some of them how to read and write, and they made excellent progress. They have all come to know the Lord and His precious Word.

Mr. Smith translated the Gospel of John into Raday as well as the Gospel of Mark. He also made a church manual, translated fifty of the Psalms and some of the Epistles to the Corinthians. We studied these in our Bible school curriculum, also the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, prayer and personal evangelism.

These nine men and five women are fully consecrated and filled with the Holy Spirit. They know the life of daily prayer and a close walk with God. They witness nightly in the chapel meetings and do evangelistic work among the villages.

Besides helping a great deal in the Bible school, I also had a class for the Raday women of the village of Banmethuot. It is harder to get the women interested in the Gospel than the men, but I thought of a plan which would perhaps bring the women to us. All Oriental women like to sew. Even the tribeswomen weave all their blankets and clothing from homespun cotton. Perhaps by giving them a little fancy sewing to do I could persuade them to come to our meetings. I went to the market and bought pieces of cotton. These I stamped for embroidery work and then obtained a supply of embroidery cotton, crochet thread and needles and cotton string for knitting from the port city. I then visited all

the longhouses in Banmethuot village and told the women that if they would come to my class twice a week I would teach them some simple embroidery work, sewing and knitting.

The plan was successful immediately. Fifteen of perhaps the brightest young women in the village came to sew. After a half an hour of the embroidery and knitting work, we would gather around the little organ and learn to sing hymns. Then I would bring out picture rolls or object lessons and soon they were deeply interested in the Gospel story.

Sometimes I had them all to our house for little tea parties. I would set a table for them out on our verandah, and we would have cinnamon rolls, sugar cakes and bowls of peanuts. How those Raday girls enjoyed themselves! The mothers brought their babies on their backs and entered into the good time with much talking and laughing. They drank eight pots of tea and ate four large platters of rolls and cakes. We brought in more cakes from the kitchen and as they were not able to eat any more they took the cakes and put them in their scarves on top of their heads for later use at home! Many of these women soon prayed and accepted Christ. They are among our strongest Christians in Banmethuot today.

An Annamese evangelist and his wife, Thai and Cô Tin, came up from the coast to help us when they graduated from the large Bible training school in Tourane, Annam. They are a very talented and capable couple, truly Spirit-filled, and were a great blessing and help in our Bible school, chapel and village work.

* * * * *

One day as we continued to preach in the villages, the break came in one section. We had been camping in Buon Krum for several days, and our trailer was parked in our favorite spot under two great clumps of bamboo. Night after

night we preached in the chief's longhouse, where a large crowd always gathered. Then one night these tribespeople responded to the Gospel.

A hundred or more of them were sitting on the bamboo floor in the dark longhouse. The only light was from the open fire on stones, and smoke filled the room. In the dimness the people looked wild and strange. All eyes were raised to Mr. Smith as he stood in the firelight and told them the Message. At first he choked with the smoke and he had to change his place several times before he found a spot where he could breathe more easily. He used picture rolls to explain the Story. The firelight flickered and gleamed over the picture of Christ on the Cross and was reflected in scores of bright black eyes peering out from the darkness. The people listened intently and the power of the Holy Spirit moved upon them.

The old sorcerer of the village rose up and said, "I'll take *Yang Yêsu Krist* (the Lord Jesus Christ). I'll not sacrifice animals any more to the spirits. I'll take Christ's Sacrifice," and he began to pray to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The chief of the village followed him, saying, "I'll go with you." Then fifty others in the room took the same stand. They came forward giving up their wrist bangles by the scores, saying, "Seven buffaloes," "Three pigs," "Four chickens," "Two cows." They were telling what the bracelets represented in their offerings to the spirits, and there were nicks on the bracelets to show the number of animals given.

They pulled down the chicken charm feathers over their doorways and destroyed the sacred tang tree branches on the roof-beams of their houses.

Other villages near by watched Buon Krum. Would calamity now come upon these people for taking the New Sacrifice? Nothing happened. Their crops were good; there was no sickness. So in one village a mile away, fifteen peo-

ple came out for the Lord, and in another, twenty. In another village seven took the stand for Christ.

It seemed that the windows of heaven were opened upon one village, Buon Pwan, where 298 accepted Christ. The chief of this village and his two sons came forward first and then almost the whole village followed them. We camped among these people for weeks at a time, living in their long-houses. We could not get our trailer to their village as it was far off the main road, hidden in the jungles. Sometimes as we were driving our Ford over the track through the tall grass we would meet a herd of wild elephants and we would have to turn around quickly and go back the way we had come or the elephants would play football with our car. Several times as we were preaching in Buon Pwan to a large group we heard the hunting call of the tiger, "*Peip! Peip!*" just on the edge of the village.

But the Spirit of God shook this village here deep in the jungle and, oh, what a happy day when we could baptize nearly three hundred of these people! My husband stood for three hours in the rushing jungle stream, baptizing men, women and children in the Name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost. He did not mind the hot sun pouring down upon him, or the little fish that kept biting at his legs in the stream. It did not matter that some of the tribes-people were covered with scaly skin diseases and ringworm. And he did not think of the fatigue. It was such a joy to see these people coming out of their old pagan customs to follow Jesus Christ in *newness of life*.

Afterwards we led them up the bank to a place in the village where we spread the Lord's Supper on a white tablecloth on the grass. And as this throng of redeemed Raday gathered around the Lord's table they understood its meaning and they said, "Ah, this Sacrifice is so much better than our old sacrifices of buffaloes, pigs and cows. This broken bread symbolizes the body of God's Son, broken for us on

Calvary's Cross, and this red pomegranate juice is His blood spilled for us."

I wish you could hear them sing:

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose ALL their guilty stains.

Even the poor tribespeople in all their wrong and evil can have their sins washed away in Jesus' blood and can be made as white as snow.

Perhaps you think that these were just mass movements, that the people were not really transformed by the Gospel. Let me cite one example—one of many—showing the personal nature of their acceptance of salvation. One man from the Krung tribe walked out of the jungle one hundred miles away and came into our bamboo chapel at Banmethuot. He sat down on a bench at the rear of the chapel and listened to my husband preach. He had on an old blanket covered with fleas and his long hair was full of vermin. His front teeth were all chopped off and lacquered coal-black. But he listened to the message. Afterwards he went up to the front and he said to my husband, "Grandfather [they always call us Grandfather and Grandmother], that message was so good that it *burned* me right here in my heart."

He had never heard the story of how Jesus walked on the road to Emmaus with those two disciples and they said that the words of Jesus *burned* within them by the way. He was just an ignorant old Krung tribesman from the jungles, but he experienced the same thing—the same burning power of the Word of God.

He said, "That was so good that I am going to join your Bible school and learn to read and write. I'm going to learn to read Mark's Gospel for myself, and then I'll go back and be a preacher to my Krung tribe "

He did not look much like a preacher but God was calling Y Teet: "Jesus saves! Onward—'tis the Lord's command; Jesus saves!"

After a few days with us in our chapel he said, "I must first go back to my village to get my blind wife and my three children. Then we can settle here in the back of your chapel while I attend the Bible school."

My husband was going on a trip to our station in Pleiku and would pass near his village, and so he drove Y Teet back the hundred miles in our car.

We wondered if he would really come back to Banmethuot again. But in three weeks' time there he was! He had his blind wife by the hand, his baby slung on his back and his two little children running ahead of him. They had walked back all the way! He put his basket of rice and clay cook-pots down on the chapel floor and said, "Well, Grandfather and Grandmother, we've come to stay."

We gave him a big cake of yellow soap with which to scrub himself. We cut off his long black hair and had him wash his head in kerosene. We threw away his old flea-ridden blanket and my husband gave him one of his own clean white shirts. He came to our Bible school and I taught him how to hold a pencil in his dry, wiry fingers. Y Teet was forty years old—which is rather old for a tribesman to learn to read—but he was so eager to learn God's Word that he worked day and night over his lessons. His only primer was Mark's Gospel but he studied it word by word, line by line. In eight months' time that dear tribesman could read and write fluently! I wish you could see his clear, round handwriting.

He drank in the messages on the Holy Spirit and prayer. He opened his heart to the Holy Spirit and He came in. Y Teet's face shone with the joy of the Lord. Even his eyes shone with the New Light.

When he heard us tell how we should spend one hour in

a quiet time every day alone with God, he obeyed. He found a little secret place in the jungle, hidden in the tall cane grass. There he would go each morning to read his Gospels and pray. Sometimes he would become so happy he would begin to glorify God at the top of his voice, and others finding him there would say, "Y Teet, to whom are you talking?"

Y Teet, his face shining, would answer, "I'm talking to God, the Chief of the Skies."

They would cry out, "Can He hear you, here in this grass?"

"Yes," Y Teet would say, and then he would tell them how we can come to God through Jesus Christ, His Son.

He was a great testimony and blessing in Banmethuot, and was one of the best students in our Bible school.

After two years he said, "Now I must go back to my Krung people and preach to them."

When he left us he carried some packages of nails in his hand. Do you know why he wanted the nails? He was going to build a longhouse chapel in his own village. He did not need the nails to build the chapel as these longhouses are all tied together with rattan; but he wanted the nails so that he could build a pulpit and some benches like we had in our bamboo chapel at Banmethuot.

Some time later my husband visited Y Teet in his village far off over the hills, deep in the jungle. Do you know what he found? Y Teet had built the longhouse chapel with his own hands, and there was the pulpit and some wooden benches. Moreover, Y Teet had won eleven of his tribespeople to the Lord!

Was he persecuted when he went back to his people with this strange new doctrine? Oh, yes! The people cried, "Y Teet, you are crazy! What is this story you are telling us of a new *Yang* (Spirit)—*Yêsu Krist*? If we forsake our old customs, the gods will be angry with us. You will bring calamity and death upon our village."

They persecuted and menaced him. They said, "We will burn down your house! We will kill you!"

"All right," Y Teet answered, "you may make a cross out of wood and nail me to it like they nailed my Saviour and Lord to a cross. But I will NEVER go back to the old animal sacrifices! I will NEVER go back to the alcohol jars!"

The people were impressed by his firm, true stand and eleven men and women came out and said, "We'll go with you, Y Teet. We'll follow *Yang Yêsu* too."

How happy my husband was to find this. He was able to baptize the eleven Christians and we believe that by this time Y Teet has won many more from his village.



CHAPTER X

MY FIRST TRIP BY ELEPHANT

One old woman came in from the Kdrao tribe 114 miles away. Her son had been taken for training in the army camp at Banmethuot and H'Bhi came in to cook his rice for him. She was a stranger in town, but one night she came to our longhouse chapel. After hearing the message she said, "My, that is so good I'm going to stay right here in this chapel for three months and learn the story of the Lord Jesus well. Then I'll take it back to my village of Buon M'Lia and tell it to my husband and the rest of the people in my longhouse."

We let her stay in one of the little rooms at the back of the chapel. She attended all the nightly meetings and soon she was up at the front, down on her knees, confessing her sins and crying out to the Lord to save her.

H'Bhi was truly converted from all her old heathen ways. She took her long pipe out of the knob of her hair and threw it away. She gave up her sacrificial bracelets and alcohol drinking. Every morning she joined with our Bible students in their prayer hour and she often gave a bright testimony in the chapel meeting at night.

She stayed with us for three months and then she said, "Now I must go back to my village and preach to my husband and the people in my longhouse."

So she went back the 114 miles over the swamps and jungles and mountains. We had never been to her village, as it is far off the beaten track and part of the way has to be traveled by elephant back.

But some weeks after H'Bhi had gone, my husband said, "I wonder how she is getting on in that village. I wonder if H'Bhi was *really* transformed by the Gospel. Was she truly a Christian? She could go off in there with no other Chris-

tians to see her and she could go back again to her pipe and alcohol jar; she could join again in the animal sacrifices and old heathen customs. I think I'll take a trip in there to see if she is really standing true."

So my husband took the long trip in, and what do you think he found? That dear old woman who had heard the Gospel for only three months had gone back to her village and won fifteen people for the Lord! Have we in the homeland who know the Blessed Story so well—have we ever won fifteen people for the Lord?

She had been persecuted by the village chief and many others in the village, but these fifteen, including her husband, two daughters and one son-in-law, took the stand for Christ as she kept on fearlessly witnessing. Every morning they came to her longhouse for family prayers. They put their faces down on the bamboo floor and each of the fifteen would pray a long and sincere prayer.

Then as they went out to their rice fields, H'Bhi would teach them to sing as they worked, "O Happy Day, When Jesus Washed My Sins Away," and "Hallelujah! Thine the Glory!" These were her two favorite hymns that she had learned in our chapel. She did not have the right tunes but she had the words and the tribespeople followed her tunes and sang them all day long.

Then in the evening when the natives returned from their rice fields, H'Bhi taught them to thank God for their rice. So they would hold up their rice bowls and thank God, the Chief of the Skies, for their evening meal. This was the first time these poor tribespeople ever thought of thanking God for their food.

Before they went to bed they must have their family prayers again; so they would all gather in H'Bhi's longhouse once more, bow their heads to the floor, and each of the fifteen would pray again.

They marked the seven days of the week on the roof-beams

of their longhouses and on the seventh day, there was no work done in the rice fields! They must all meet in H'Bhi's house for singing and prayer.

We had given her some Sunday school picture rolls and she had told these stories over and over so many times that the pictures were almost worn into ribbons. She taught the fifteen Christians to get up and tell the stories too.

That is what my husband found when he arrived in Buon M'Lia! He was overjoyed as he visited with H'Bhi and the Christians there for a week.

Some time after his return, we received a letter from the Christians in this village. They had put the note on the end of a split bamboo stick and had sent a runner with it. This is the way we sometimes receive letters in the jungle. The note said:

Dear Grandfather:

Persecution has broken out worse than ever in the village now. Our persecutors say they will tell the French officer at the Fort that we have become Christians and he will throw us all into prison. Oh, Grandfather, do come back and help us and this time be sure to bring Grandmother with you to comfort us too.

We began to pack and prepare to go. I am not particularly fond of riding elephant back, but I could not resist this earnest plea. We took little three-year-old Stanley along with us. Our other two boys, Douglas and Leslie, were attending our mission school in the Dalat Mountains.

We drove the first hundred miles by car over a French highway. Then we left our car at the Fort of M'Drak and called to see the French officer there. He is in charge of the tribespeople in this district. We told him about the persecutions the Christians in Buon M'Lia were experiencing and he went beyond our expectations in helping us. Some of the officers say to us, "Why don't you leave these people alone? They are only dogs—they have no souls! Leave

them to their own superstitions and beliefs." But the Holy Spirit had gone ahead of us and prepared this man's heart.

He sat down at his desk and wrote out a letter to the chief of Buon M'Lia, saying:

Send out three elephants to the road tomorrow for Mr. and Mrs. Smith. When they arrive in your village, call all the people together to listen to their good message. No harm will come to those who believe this new doctrine.

Then he put the seal of France on the note and handed it to a Raday soldier who fastened it on the end of a cleft stick and ran in with it to Buon M'Lia. Only barefooted tribesmen and lumbering elephants travel this trail through the rough, wet swamps and over the forest-clad mountains. Unceasing alertness of eye and ear is necessary to discover first the lurking tiger or snake.

We slept that night in a little bamboo shack by the side of the road. About noon the next day the elephants arrived. I anxiously watched them as they lurched along toward us. What would it be like to ride on one of these? They are colossal beasts from ten to twelve feet high. A mahout sits behind the swinging sail-like ears and urges his mount on with little jerks of his knees and toes. We were to get up into a basket on the elephant's back—a wooden contraption made of slats and bamboo loosely tied on with rattan ropes.

As they drew up before us the mahouts prodded the thick skull of each elephant with an iron-pointed stick and the great animals dropped obediently to their knees. We piled our baggage on one. Mr. Smith was to ride the other and I, the third—going in state into the village. But I was too afraid to get up into one of those baskets alone. So I made my husband get up with Stanley and me. Our two native preachers could ride Mr. Smith's elephant.

I began to climb up my elephant. I was going up his nose and was just by his ears when a car suddenly came whizzing around the bend of the highway. My old elephant rose

quickly to his feet and I went headfirst into the basket! I was so glad I hit the basket. I had no desire to fall down under those enormous feet!

Little Stanley came fearlessly up the long trunk like a little monkey, and Mr. Smith, with his long legs, took two or three steps and he was up into the basket. Then we had to get settled in our cage. The howdah is small for three people and when Mr. Smith got his long legs curled in on one side and Stanley and I squeezed in cross-legged on the other side, we were somewhat cramped. In fact, very soon, every muscle in us shrieked to get out and stretch!

But we lurched along, headed into the hills, at two miles an hour and we had fourteen miles to go!

A wooden bell with bamboo hammers was suspended by rattan around our elephant's neck and it accompanied our march with rhythmic, hollow, clacking strokes that were very pleasing.

It was not so bad until we came to the pole bridges! I had forgotten about them. Each elephant weighs six tons; if they tried to cross these poles there would not be any bridge left! We were now on the edge of the twenty-foot bank of a stream. How were we to get down the bank? Our lead elephant got down on his hind knees, put his front feet forward and *slithered* down the bank! Our howdah nearly went over his ears! I clung desperately to the cage and our mahout laughed heartily at the face I made.

The elephants took their time when they got into the stream. It was delightfully cool in there; so they lumbered around joyfully, churning the water to mud. They filled up their long trunks and sprayed and sprayed their stomachs. What if they should decide to spray their *backs*? We grew restless. "Shall we *ever* get out of this stream?" We told our mahout to prod our old elephant on the head to make him move on. The elephant promptly turned his long nose around and BLEW IT RIGHT AT US! Consequently we were

covered with muddy water. Elephants are very temperamental beasts and these would not leave the stream until they were ready.

I kept eyeing the twenty-foot bank on the other side. How were we to get up that? At last our old elephant was ready to go on; so he got down on his front knees this time and climbed up, up the bank while our howdah seemed to slide back on his tail! How frightened I was!

My husband uses elephants rather frequently and had made this trip before. He said the bamboo thongs that held our howdah to the enormous back would not break and I need not fear. But these thongs are only rattan—climbing *plants* from the forest. How could they be strong? I had inquired of the natives beforehand and they comfortably told me that the ropes do not often break but sometimes the howdah is tied on so loosely that it slides down underneath the elephant's stomach and everyone tumbles out on the ground!

But our mahout straddled the big beast's neck with the most nonchalant air and even little Stanley took it all as a matter of course and was soon rocked to sleep. So I had to hide my fears and rock and roll along with our ship.

As we crossed through the swamps the loglike legs of our elephants made deep holes in the whitish mud. Where there was water the going was slow indeed as the elephants sank to their stomachs, ponderously rose up with a tidal surge of white slime, sank again, and rose up, dragging us along as they went.

Elephants require an enormous amount of food a day, and so they eat twenty hours out of the twenty-four. Every few steps our elephant would stretch out his "hand" (the name which the natives give to his trunk) in quest of a bamboo shoot. He would grip it, curl it up into his mouth and soon the huge molars would crush the sweet morsel. He pulled up grass continually, whirling it against his tusks to knock

off the dirt before shoving it into his cavernous pink mouth.

Late in the afternoon we climbed high up into a wooded mountain where we reveled in the cool gloom of the tropical forest. The ground was thickly covered with ferns and palm shrubs, and coiling flowering creepers hung down from the tree limbs where the monkeys played. Yellow and mauve sprays of orchids here and there starred the dark greenery, and we drove our elephants over to them that we might gather some of the exquisite blooms to drape them in our howdah. Brilliant red and gold birds flashed through the dark branches and a spicy scent filled the air.

Finally the valley of Buon M'Lia stretched out far below us and the elephants began to pick their way in a zigzag down the steep mountain. Jerk, jolt, lurch! We clung on tightly and watched the straining rattan ropes, for it would be a long way to drop! How we wished for shock absorbers on those front legs! Every step down was a shock that made us brace ourselves continually.

Lured at times to a tasty branch off to one side, our old elephant stopped the caravan while he broke it off and munched the leaves, while our howdah tipped down near his ears on the steep incline. When our driver gave him a blow for slowing up the trip, he raised his trunk and blasted sharply with displeasure. We hung on as our flimsy basket shook over a five hundred foot drop!

Buon M'Lia at last! Clustered together on the bank of a stream were the longhouses of the Kdraos, members of the Raday tribe. Old H'Bhi and her family came running to meet us, waving and shouting happy greetings. Drawing up to the high verandah of poles in front of her house, we stepped down stiffly over the elephant's ears and were warmly welcomed by the villagers.

We were to camp here for several days; so we spread our blankets out on the bumpy bamboo floor, tied our mosquito net to the sooty beams of the longhouse and draped it down

around our bedding. Our dining table was a small wooden stool, eight inches high, and our kitchen stove was at arm's length away—a simple firebox of hard clay in the center of which was an open fire built upon several stones.

We were hungry after our long jolting ride, and so we soon had our pot of rice set on the stones and bubbling cheerfully. We sat on the floor before our tiny dining table to eat our supper. A crowd of tribespeople gathered near to watch us.

After supper there occurred one of the most genuine evidences of consecration we have ever witnessed among these tribespeople.

"Grandfather," H'Bhi's daughter said, "here is my bracelet. In giving this to you, I give my life wholly to God."

My husband took the brass ring, realizing that no more sincere avowal could be made by a tribesman than that signified by the giving of the bracelet. It was not the sacrificial bracelet that they use when they make pacts with the evil spirits at their animal sacrifices. Those had been thrown away months before. This was the kind of pact-making bracelet which they use when they swear allegiance to France, consenting to be subdued and protected. They take that oath by "touching the bracelet" with the French Administrator of the Province. Now they wanted to make a vow before God, affirming that they were going to swear allegiance to Christ and follow Him wholeheartedly.

"Hand it to my husband," the girl requested, "for he joins with me in this." The ring was held out to her husband and he put his hand upon it, repeating his desire to follow the Lord with all his heart.

One after another did the same until the fifteen Christians, husbands and wives, had transacted their vows of consecration.

"Now teach us to sing, Grandfather and Grandmother," they cried. So we led them in many hymns. "We want to

know more about prayer." We taught their hungry, eager hearts until we noticed it was nine o'clock.

"Why," we cried, "you haven't eaten your supper yet! Your rice will be all cold out at the back of the longhouse!"

"We'll eat it after the meeting," they answered.

They had not eaten anything since early morning but they were getting something better than rice. They were eagerly feeding on the Bread of Life. Joyfully we went on teaching them.

The familiar ringing call of a sambur deer, "*Payo! Payo!*" echoed from the edge of the village. Some of the men urged my husband to go and shoot it. "Wait," the others said. "We want to learn more about prayer."

We realized that these people were deeply in earnest when they would put the Gospel before their food. On our arrival in a village they usually plead with us to provide meat, for they find it exceedingly difficult to obtain game for themselves.

The meeting went on until I had to crawl into bed from fatigue. My husband and the Raday evangelists continued to teach them to sing. Finally my husband said, "Well, I guess we'll go out and shoot that deer now before we go to bed." So they went out and got the sambur deer that was still feeding on the edge of the village. Four men struggled in with it tied to a pole.

It is difficult to sleep in the longhouse. How hard and bumpy the bamboo floor is! People keep walking about through the night and the floor shakes and creaks as they tramp over it. Underneath us on the ground below are grunting pigs and water buffaloes.

The last time my husband was here sleeping in H'Bhi's longhouse, a tiger came underneath the house and snatched a pig. The pig squealed and the people chased after the tiger with their spears, shouting and yelling. My husband seized his gun and ran out in his pajamas to join in the chase.

The frightened tiger dropped the pig but it was dead by that time. The people had a feast over the pig and the old tiger waited in the forest for another chance to steal an animal from the village.

At dawn we were awakened by the raucous cries of the wild peacocks, the crowing of wild roosters and the clear, strong, whistling call of the gibbon apes.

After the prayer-meeting in H'Bhi's house, in which the fifteen Christians took part, we all went over to the chief's house. He obeyed the letter sent in to him by the French officer and called in all the villagers to his longhouse. Those who had been persecuting the Christians had nothing to say now, since they had received the message from the Frenchman in charge.

What a good time we had explaining the Gospel to those village people! Afterwards we asked them questions until we were sure that they understood the way of salvation. We met together again in the afternoon and they left their work in their rice fields to hear more of the Word of God.

At dusk we returned to H'Bhi's house for supper. On the way we spied a long-tailed peacock high up in a tree. Mr. Smith aimed at it; and although it was barely discernible up among the leaves, it came hurtling heavily down. So the villagers had a treat of fowl and we had the gorgeous seven-foot tail of gleaming bronze, blue and green plumes to put up fanwise on the wall of our home in Banmethuot.

Watching us eat our supper, H'Bhi's old husband remarked, "We could never count the number of things they eat. There must be thirty things at least: salt, pepper, bread, butter, fish in cans, milk in cans, vegetables—" He mentioned salt first, for the jungle people suffer when it is not obtainable. They sometimes have to sprinkle ashes on their food when their supply of salt is exhausted. Their limited menu consists only of rice, dried meat of any animal, and the roots and greens which they get from the forest.

On our third day in the village we had a happy baptismal service. H'Bhi indicated those who were thoroughly ready for it. Any who had backslidden, even though they now confessed a strong desire to follow the Lord, must wait for several more months of trial. They must meet at her house each morning and night for prayer and to sing the hymns they know. So only the consecrated fifteen Christians were baptized in Buon M'Lia; all experienced much blessing, and afterwards we partook of the Lord's Supper in H'Bhi's house. We pray that soon this whole village will truly give up their old heathen ways to walk in newness of life with Christ.

After five days in the village we ordered our elephants for an early start the next day. But they had wandered far off, and it was not until nine o'clock that their great grey wrinkled bulks drew up to the pole verandah. From early morning the Christians had been telling us how sad they were at our leaving.

"You must come back soon. You are our father and mother," they said earnestly.

Naturally undemonstrative, these dear people waved and waved until our caravan disappeared into the tall grass of the foothills.

The ascent out of the valley was slower, but time passed quickly as we recalled all the blessings of the past few days. Arriving at the road once more, we changed from elephant to Ford, and went speeding some thirty miles towards home to another village which was calling us and whose chief was to be baptized the next day.



CHAPTER XI

LEO, A RADAY TRIBESBOY

Leo, a brown-skinned Raday boy, sat on his water buffalo's back, straight as a young sapling. He was guarding a herd of buffaloes as they pastured in the long grass on the edge of the jungle. All day he had been caring for them and it was late afternoon now—the most dangerous time, for it was the hunting time of the tiger.

Suddenly the buffalo sniffed excitedly into the wind. Leo heard a stealthy sound in the tangled jungle growth. "Perhaps it is a tiger," he thought. Quickly and with much shouting he turned the buffaloes into the path towards the village and struck them smartly with his long bamboo stick; the herd rushed off and did not stop until they reached the familiar mud wallow at the entrance to the village. Leo let them roll down deeply into the mire that they might cool their nonporous skins. Then he herded them together under his father's longhouse where they would be safe for the night from the prowling jungle beasts.

The longhouse of Leo's parents was typical of the sixty others in the village. It was two hundred feet long, twenty feet wide and was built on high wooden posts. The floor and walls were of woven bamboo and the roof was a thick thatch of grass.

Leo ran lightly up the notched pole "stairway," over the open log verandah and through the long, outer ceremonial room of the longhouse. The resilient bamboo floor sprang up and down as he walked on it out to the family living quarters at the back of the house. There his parents, brothers and sisters were squatting on the floor near an open fire, eating the evening meal with their fingers. They had rice in black earthenware cook pots, some bits of dried meat and spinachlike herbs which the women had gathered from the

forest. They had not eaten since early morning; so all were very hungry and ate greedily. Leo was soon dipping into the family rice pot, too, scooping up the fluffy kernels with his fingers.

"We are in need of more salt," said the father. "Leo must go in to the market town of Banmethuot tomorrow to get some for us. He can sleep at my brother's longhouse while in town. E-Yum here, can guard the water buffaloes while Leo is away."

So at daybreak the next morning Leo was off barefooted on the thirty-mile jungle trail into Banmethuot. He had his back-basket full of deer horns and dried buffalo skins to trade for the precious white salt the yellow-skinned Anamese brought up from the coast.

At sunset he arrived in the trading center of Banmethuot. On either side of the main road were the brick houses of the French government officials. Leo liked the busy Anamese market with the booths filled with beads, bright cloth, coils of brass wire for wrist bangles and blue-flowered rice bowls from the coast.

He went for evening rice to his uncle's longhouse. "You must go tonight to a new longhouse recently built in our village," said his cousin Plu. "It is called 'The House of God, the Chief of the Skies.' You will hear a white man and woman speaking in our Raday language. They tell strange new stories about the Ancestor of the Skies. You can tell your village about them on your return."

As he was speaking the sound of music came from this new longhouse down the road. The sound was something like the Raday gourd-pipes, but much louder.

Many tribespeople were entering the longhouse. "Let us hurry over there," cried Leo. The boys ran down the road and peered in at the door of the longhouse.

The great room was in darkness but for a very brilliant re-

flection on a large white cloth up on the front wall. Images of people were reflected on this background.

Leo whispered, "They are reflected there just as I have seen my own face reflected in a still pool."

Suddenly the images disappeared and now on the cloth there was a man who held out his hand to a sick person lying on a mat.

A voice was speaking in the Raday language. "That is the white teacher talking," said Plu.

"*Yang Yêsu* told the lame man to take up his bed and walk. Immediately the lame man arose, rolled up his mat, put it on his shoulder and leaped and danced. *Yang Yêsu* had healed him."

Leo stood rooted to the verandah poles, listening. "Let's go inside," he whispered to Plu. "I want to see more."

They groped their way through the gloom of the chapel and sat down beside some other Raday on a bench. Leo put his feet up under him and listened intently to the white man.

"You Raday are like this poor man on the mat. You are helpless with the disease of sin. The Lord Jesus Christ—*Yang Yêsu Krist*—can take you by the hand and set you free. He can deliver you."

There were many more reflections of *Yang Yêsu*, showing His wonderful power over sickness, sin and death.

Then there came a startling image of a great cross of wood. The Son of God was lifted up on it, nailed there by His hands and feet.

"*A—baih!*" exclaimed the tribesmen in the longhouse. "He must have been a very wicked man to die like that," said one.

"No," explained the white teacher. "He had no sin. He was the spotless Son of God. But He took the sins of all mankind upon His shoulders there on the Cross. He was punished there in our stead."

"But if He was a *Yang*—a Spirit—how could He die?" asked another tribesman.

"God's Son was a Spirit, but He took upon Himself the body of a man. He came down to this earth as a man to be a sacrifice for us there on the Cross."

"This is the true Sacrifice," went on the white teacher, "the only one God will accept. God does not want your sacrifices of buffaloes, cows and pigs. God doesn't want the blood of those animals. This is the Sacrifice God has provided for us—His own Son. This blood from Christ's hands and feet and side is the only blood God will accept."

"Jesus Christ rose again from the tomb." Another reflection showed *Yang Yêsu* alive again in a garden with a woman kneeling joyfully at His feet.

"He lives today," said the teacher. "He wants to save you from your sins and burdens of fear and superstition. He can break all the fetters and chains that bind you and He can bring you into freedom and light."

"Where is *Yang Yêsu's* village?" asked a tribesman.

"His 'village' is up beyond the skies. It is a beautiful place called heaven."

"Does *Yang Yêsu* speak Raday?" the tribesmen asked.

"Oh, yes! He speaks all languages."

The little box showing the bright reflections on the white cloth was now turned off and the longhouse was suddenly filled with bright light from a small round ball hanging from the ceiling, similar to that which the French people have in their brick houses. The bamboo room resembled the ceremonial room in Leo's father's longhouse, but there were no rows of brown pottery alcohol jars against the wall, no tom-toms and no brass gongs hanging from the roof-beams.

The white woman sat down before a box and ran her fingers up and down on a row of shiny bits of ivory. Gourd-pipe music came out of the box. The white people began to sing. The Raday women hid their faces behind their head-shawls and laughed.

"You sing too," the white man said. Leo grinned. "What a funny way to use a human voice."

The singing and the music from the box seemed to go about the same way—up and down with many changes. The Raday music on the gongs and gourd-pipes always had the same tune—a few bars repeated over and over. It would be hard to learn to sing this new way. The Raday men's singing consists of stories chanted in a monotone.

"Take your pipe out of your mouth," said the teacher, pointing at Leo.

"Why should I?" asked Leo. "I always smoke in our longhouse."

"But this is God's longhouse. You must respect it and keep it holy. Do not spit on the floor."

"But I don't see why I can't if I aim carefully through the bamboo slats."

"Shut your eyes now," said the white teacher. "We are going to talk to the Great Chief of the Skies."

"What will happen now?" wondered Leo. "I shall keep one eye open to see."

The white man shut his own eyes and lifting up his face talked as if the Great Chief of the Skies were right there in the room.

Leo opened his other eye but could not see anything.

The white man asked all the tribespeople to return to the chapel for a meeting the following night.

When Leo and Plu went back to their longhouse the rest of the family were asleep. But one longhouse in the village was awake. They were having an animal sacrifice there. Leo and Plu went over and joined the other young men at pounding the gongs. Two water buffaloes had been sacrificed for a sick man in the longhouse. The animals had been slowly tortured to death, for the more they suffered and cried out the better the spirits would be appeased. The village sorcerer had sprinkled the buffalo blood over the door-

posts, on the gongs and tom-tom and smeared it on the legs and arms of the sick man. Now he held some of the blood up in a bowl and, calling on the spirits, chanted, "Oh, spirits of the North, the South, the East, the West; spirits of the trees, the rocks, the rivers—come, see the blood of these buffaloes and bring good health to this sick man."

Leo listened to him and thought of the other Sacrifice of which he had just heard in the longhouse chapel—the Sacrifice of the Son of the Chief of the Skies on that Cross.

"That is a better Sacrifice," he thought. "The Son of the Chief of the Skies is greater than these animals. His blood is of more value than the blood of buffaloes or cows. These animal sacrifices won't help me. *Yang Yêsu's* Sacrifice will lead me into light and peace. I'm going to take Him as my Sacrifice and Saviour."

Leo talked it over with Plu and the next night the two boys returned to the chapel meeting. At the close of the service they spoke to the white teacher and his wife.

"Come over to our house tomorrow morning," said the teacher. "I will teach you from this book of Mark. It is God's own Book, translated into your Raday language."

Leo and Plu went there early next morning and the teacher spent several hours with them, explaining to them the New Way.

It was time for Leo to return the thirty miles to his parents' village. He thought day and night of the message he had heard from the white teacher in Banmethuot. He longed to be able to read that book of Mark for himself.

One day as he was hoeing in his father's rice field he could resist the urge inside him no longer. He threw down the hoe and cried, "I must return to Banmethuot and ask the white man to teach me to read God's Book. I cannot rest until I know more about *Yang Yêsu Krist*."

Leo went back to the longhouse chapel. He and Plu attended all the nightly meetings. They went each day to the

missionary's home and studied the Word of God. They became some of the first students in the Bible school for the Raday tribespeople. Today Leo is one of the most capable native evangelists in the Banmethuot district.



CHAPTER XII

THE FIRST RADAY CHRISTMAS

It was our first Christmas in our bamboo longhouse chapel—the first Christmas the Raday ever celebrated. So we wanted to put the Christmas story before these tribespeople in a way that they could understand and never forget.

We had translated four Christmas hymns into the Raday language and began in August to teach them to the Christians. By Christmas time even those who could not usually carry a tune were singing these hymns lustily.

We planned a program with five scenes from the Christmas story to be given by our fourteen Raday Bible students. The wording was taken from Scripture and the students learned their parts well, putting their whole hearts into it.

An Annamese woman helped me make the costumes. We tried to make them as authentic as possible, following the pictures in the Bible-story books and picture rolls. We used scarlet and blue hand-woven Raday blankets with their polychrome borders as cloaks for the three “wise men” and gay Laotian scarfs made rich turbans and girdles. The “shepherds” wore short tunics with white head-cloths, as in the pictures, and leopard, monkey and tiger-cat skins were draped over their backs and shoulders. They carried crooks and heavy clubs.

“Mary” was a young native woman and she was beautiful with her long hair to her knees and soft robes of blue and white. The “angel” was a young man who had a pale, ethereal-looking face with fine features. We made him great white wings and he wore a long white garment girdled high with tinsel and a halo of tinsel on his head. He carried a white lily.

We sent out attractive invitations to all the French families and native officials in town and of course invited all the Raday tribesmen from far and near.

Then we decorated our longhouse chapel. Some of our boys walked seven or eight miles into the jungle to get some especially lovely tall, fernlike palms. We banked the front of the chapel with these and encircled them around the wooden posts along the aisles. We also wreathed the window-frames with these fern palms.

Garlands of red and green paper chains were looped from the center of the thatched ceiling to each pillar in the chapel and were caught with red wreaths and bells. This made a continuous path of swinging arches the length of the chapel. Over the central lights we hung red and green paper stars.

Then in one corner we placed our Christmas tree. It was made of pine branches brought from the mountains, wired together until we had a well-shaped tree. We trimmed it with the gay ornaments and strings of colored lights from home. This was all something marvelous to the Raday and we had a crowd in the chapel watching all these preparations.

On the night of the program the French people arrived—seventy of them—government officials and army officers with their families. The Raday packed the chapel to the doors—to the roof, in fact.

Mr. Smith gave a brief message first, telling that this was the first Christmas the Raday had ever known and how glad we were that now, at last, this message of Peace and Hope and Light was getting out to these forest people. He told how the students who were giving the Christmas message in the program had been living in ignorance and darkness only a few months ago, but that the coming of the Gospel to them had indeed changed their hearts.

Then the footlights were turned on, the curtains drawn and a "prophet" stood on the platform dressed in a long gray garment with scarlet-lined sleeves and a scarlet drape. He gave a fiery message, prophesying the coming of a Messiah, a Redeemer for the world. A "scribe" sat at his feet, writing

down the prophetic words taken from Isaiah, Ezra and Micah. Y Leo, who acted the prophet's part, did wonderfully well. He had been studying the Word for several months.

Of course, the entire message was given in the Raday language, but the French guests had translated copies of the program and so they could follow all that was said. We had a stereopticon lantern at the back of the chapel and used this as a spotlight with which to throw colored lights over the scenes.

The second scene was the Annunciation. "Mary," softly humming, came in with a water jar on her shoulder, and sat down in the garden to meditate. She made a lovely picture in the glow of the blue floodlight. Then the "Angel Gabriel" appeared up among the palm setting and came down and handed her the white lily. As "Mary" knelt in prayer, the angels sang behind the scenes and a cross appeared in shadow above her head.

The third scene depicted the shepherds watching their flocks by night. They sat around a fire in the dim blue light and played their native flutes and gourd-pipe instruments. Suddenly a "king" in glittering costume crossed their pathway in the night, looking for a road. The "shepherds" withdrew, startled, and two more "kings from the East" came, following the star and searching for the One whom the Scriptures prophesied should be born. The "shepherds" stole back again and listened to the prophesies which the "kings" read from the scrolls. Then as the "wise men" departed on their way the "shepherds" knelt around their fire in the night to pray. Suddenly an "angel" appeared above them in a glow of changing colored lights and announced to these poor "shepherds" the wonderful birth of the Saviour of men.

The fourth scene portrayed the shepherds' declaration of the glad tidings to the three wise men. The characters entered excitedly, exclaiming, "We have seen the King! Christ,

the Lord! Our Saviour!" They threw their souls into the message as they told the story of the angel's visit and the shepherds' journey to the manger to see the Child as the angel said.

The fifth scene depicted the shepherds leading the kings to the inn. The curtain opened with the room all in darkness except for the light from the crude manger which shone on "Mary" and "Joseph." Then as the kings and shepherds entered, dim footlights softly illuminated the scene. They all knelt around the manger as the "kings" offered their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Then the angel again appeared in a glow of light above them, with hands outstretched in blessing, and announced, *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only . . . Son.* The organ behind the scenes pealed out "O Come, All Ye Faithful," and French and Raday alike rose and joined in singing praise to Christ our Lord.

It was all beautiful, and when one realized it was done by the poor Raday who a few months ago were living like semi-savages out in their villages in the forest, one's heart was moved. How quickly God can work His miracles even in savage breasts!

Then the students came in again and sang the four Christmas hymns they had been learning during the fall. The French were touched and could not believe that the Raday could do so well.

Now the lights were turned on the Christmas tree and all the French joined in singing their Christmas song, "*Mon Beau Sapin.*" At the end, old Santa Claus himself came bounding in attired in his red suit and long white beard. He was a tall Santa with lumps here and there which I fear looked rather "pillowy." He opened his pack and took out a little bag of candy and a tiny trinket for each French child present. As he called the names, the little ones went up to the front and talked to old Santa in the mysterious, magical

light of the Christmas tree. Santa was very funny, pretending he could not see some of the little ones plainly and had to peer around for them through his magnifying glass; or he would become absent-minded and give his reading glass to some of the children and keep their candy for himself! Little Stanley was so pleased when Santa patted his head. He kept telling us afterwards, "He pat mine head like dis," and showed us.

As the French left they told us that it was a revelation to them to see how capable the Raday were of understanding and interpreting the Gospel story. We feel that their interest has been awakened and our work strengthened by their coming to this program.

The Raday stayed on to hear more of the Gospel message and at the close of the evening we brought out baskets of Chinese cakes and candy and distributed them to all the Raday, explaining that because God gave His Son to us at Christmas time, we like to give gifts to them. Before they partook of the simple good things we had them all bow their heads in prayer and thank God for the wondrous gift of His Son to all mankind.

The tribesmen enjoyed it all so much that they asked us to repeat the program the following night. We did so and again had a packed house.

Hundreds of Raday saw the Christmas scenes and heard the story, and many of these dark-skinned tribespeople are opening their hearts to receive the Prince of Peace.

CHAPTER XIII

WE GET A TIGER SKIN

Returning from one of our annual missionary conferences at Dalat, Annam, we brought home with us one of our colleagues, Bob Chrisman, from Thailand. He had heard that there was good hunting in Banmethuot and was eager to spend some of his holiday with us that he might try out a new gun given him by a friend in America. My husband was in need of a change from his work and so was also glad to spend a few days hunting.

Gordon and Bob took the trailer out into the jungle forty kilometers from Banmethuot and made a vow that they would not shave until they got a tiger. They came back after several days, with black beards and no tiger. They had seen one, however, while they were hunting on elephant back, but it disappeared into the dark jungle before they could aim at it from the swinging elephant.

They were also excited about their encounter with a herd of wild elephants. At the time they were in the car, driving down the road several miles from their camp. They came to a place where many trees were broken down and the undergrowth flattened out; so they knew that there were wild elephants around. They drove on, eager for adventure, and suddenly the vast form of a female elephant, with a baby elephant beside her, loomed up on the road ahead of them. She raised her trunk and blared an angry challenge at them. Gordon and Bob decided to back quietly out of the picture. They could not turn around as the road was too narrow. Bob kept his eyes fixed on the elephant while Gordon watched the road behind as he backed up. The forest echoed all around them with the blasts and squeals of the herd. They were glad to come to a turning place and scoot back to the safety of their camp in the M'Nong village.

They returned home for food immensely thrilled over their adventures, and decided to go on after the tiger. They were away for a day or two when at last they drove up to the house again. This time the air about them was laden with mysterious importance and I could only stand in the doorway waiting, spellbound. Then they slowly and majestically lifted a great tiger skin from the car and as they held it silently up for inspection, I became weak in the knees with excitement.

Solemnly they brought the royal skin into the house and with awe we sat and listened to the story of the hunt.

The previous evening, at five P. M., they were driving down the road from the camp when they saw it. It was far on the road ahead of them, sitting like a dog on his haunches. Gordon jammed the brakes on the car, and as it was slithering to a standstill in the red mud road, he pointed the gun through the open windshield and aimed at the tiger two hundred yards away. With determined aim Gordon shot him through the neck! He bolted like a yellow streak from the road and the men wondered if he had bounded away to safety. But as they rushed the car to the spot they saw his great tail whirling around and lashing in the grass as he was breathing his last by the side of the road. They were so afraid that he would jump up and run away (as other tigers have done) that Gordon cried, "Oh, Bob, shoot some more!" Bob shot a volley of buckshot into the tiger and he was very dead by then! It took four men—Gordon, Bob and two M'Nongs with them—to heave the tiger on the back of the car. They took him back to the trailer camp and worked until eleven P. M., skinning him carefully.

They went hunting again on elephant back next morning, greedy for more tigers, but they saw only about twenty deer, and Bob shot one of them.

Then they came home at noon and now had to finish scraping off every bit of flesh from the tiger's hide. It was a tedi-

ous job, especially the ears and toes. When it was perfectly clean they put it in a salt and alum solution for three days, then dried it.

When it was quite dry, after several days, we sent it down to Saigon where it was tanned and mounted. We had boiled the skull too, and it was placed in the head with the mouth open and the great curved teeth showing.

When the skin was returned to us it looked so lifelike spread out on our living room floor that little Stanley was afraid of it.

We love the "two white pennies" on the tops of the ears that the "ancients" put there to bribe the tigers not to eat their children.

We were very sorry that Bob did not get a tiger too but he will come back again for another try.



CHAPTER XIV

THE OPENING OF PLEIKU PROVINCE

One morning we packed some pots and pans, clothes and bedding into our homemade trailer, and took the road to Pleiku, a village two hundred miles from Banmethuot, among the Jarai tribespeople. We traveled steadily all morning along a winding road over hills and through deep forests. Once we saw tiger tracks in the ditch beside us. We lunched under a bridge, by cool rushing water, on fresh sandwiches and cookies and cold drinks, as we had fifty pounds of ice in our trailer icebox. While we were eating, a wild rooster stepped out of the forest near us, his colors so bright that one would think that he had just walked out of a paint box. Our gun was in the car on the bridge and by the time we ran to get it he had flown away. So we did not get him for our larder.

In the afternoon it became blistering hot in the car—98 degrees—so we stopped on another shaded bridge and bathed in a little stream. Baby Stanley enjoyed this very much. He stood in the center of the little pool chasing the polliwogs and splashed out circles as he “swam” on his stomach. When it was time to go he refused to leave, for he was determined to stay right there in the middle of the cool pool. So his father had to cut long switches from a tree and chase him out by splashing the water hard all around him.

Some Jarai tribesmen came along and cut down wild green mangos from a tree by the river and ate them. They were very sour and unripe. We told them that was the reason they suffered severe stomach pains from which some died, but they merely laughed goodnaturedly at us and kept on eating. The natives all seem to like the fruit unripe and sour.

We went on in the heat and when it became intolerable

again we stopped under a huge banyan tree where more Jarai were gathered. They were taking pretty black and white baskets to the Resident at Pleiku. We had a Raday Christian, Ngiang, with us, who knew a little Jarai, so he preached to this crowd. They were sympathetic and interested. They had never heard the Story before, of course.

As we neared Pleiku, the scenery became extraordinarily beautiful. There were no more high thick grasses and dense jungle forests, but great grassy plains rolling out to chains of pale blue mountains melting into the horizon. We imagined we were back in Alberta or Montana and expected to see some cowboys on horseback come racing towards us. But there were just a few lumbering water buffaloes.

As we came nearer Pleiku, a magnificent mountain rose up before us out of the flatness. The road cut straight towards this mountain and it took us up to a splendid view—an immense circling panorama, steeped in haze and banded with mountain peaks of the same color as the horizon.

Then we swept down the mountain and out into the plain, the road curving between rolling hills up to Pleiku village, with its pretty *torchi* (whitewashed mud) houses and swaying palm trees.

AN OPEN DOOR

As we drove into town the people ran to the doors to see our "caravan." We drove up before the Administrator's office, and all the French officials came out on the steps to welcome us. The Administrator invited Mr. Smith into his office. They talked about the work of the Roman Catholics in this region. "They are very much discouraged with their work among the tribes," the Administrator said. "They are abandoning a lot of it. Whereas there used to be three or four French priests in Pleiku town, now there is only a native worker."

"Where do you think it would be best for me to start evangelizing in this province?" Mr. Smith inquired, not without

some trepidation. "I suppose there is still plenty of room for us."

"Look at this map," the Administrator replied, jumping up and sweeping his hand over the entire Pleiku province. "Except for one or two small places where the Catholics have a little work, the whole province is free. Here is the most logical place for you to start, Chéo Réo, the political center of the Jarai."

Mr. Smith could hardly contain his joy, and felt that God was indeed in the room, working out His plan for reaching this people. The province is entirely inhabited by tribespeople: the Jarai, Hedrongs, Habaus, Araps, Bahnars, Mdhurs and Krungs.

We lost no time in going to Chéo Réo, sixty miles beyond Pleiku. The village consists of bamboo Jarai longhouses, a crude hospital and school, and the home of one Frenchman and his wife, alone in this post. The French house was made of *torchis* too, with a high cone-shaped thatched roof like the "skyscraper" community houses of the Bahnar tribe near here. The wide shaded verandah was bordered with blazing red and yellow canna lilies.

A PICTURESQUE SCENE

The Frenchman had just called in the Jarai young men of his province to choose soldiers for a new battalion at the camp in Banmethuot. Hundreds of sturdy bronze youths were circled before the Delegate on his verandah. Their smooth brown bodies were naked but for the blue-fringed loincloths, pewter neck rings, and white ivory ear plugs. Navy blue cloth was wound like a turban in neat layers around each native's head, held by rows of safety pins brought from the Annamese stores in Pleiku. They think the bright safety pins are fine ornaments. A native doctor sat beside the Frenchman; and as the Jarai filed up to him, he measured their chests, backs and wrists, to see if they would

make good soldiers. The finest youths were chosen, and these moved before the French Delegate, who recorded their names in a book and set them apart to be soldiers for France.

We pitched our camp beside a stream a mile down the road; and as we ate our supper by the light of a gasoline lamp, a crowd of Jarai came around. Mr. Smith preached to them, with the aid of picture rolls and illustrations, far into the night. Some of them understood Raday and translated to the others. Stanley and I fell asleep inside the trailer to the sound of their voices in the still forest.

Next morning we called at the *torchi* bamboo schoolhouse. About one hundred Jarai boys were sitting in rows at their long desks. The teacher was a Jarai; and as we entered, he was putting some addition problems on the little blackboard. They all rose to greet us, and bowed. We asked about their language and inquired as to what reading material was available in the Jarai tongue. They have no books—only the alphabet and some dictations. They learn French from a French primer. We took away a copy of their school dictations in Jarai; and when Mr. Smith can get a capable Jarai teacher, he will try to get a simple story of the Gospel printed for them. It would not take him very long to get a vocabulary of their words. The boys all stood as we left, and bowed. They are intelligent lads—a tremendous challenge for a new missionary couple. We have asked for missionaries for Pleiku and this section of 140,000 Jarai tribespeople.

We drove to the near-by village of Ama Kanik (Father of Kanik). These people have bamboo longhouses like the Raday, but they put more wood into them. Their longhouses have wooden plank verandahs, wooden doors and window frames. A large crowd gathered to hear our message.

Little Stanley went off to the other end of the longhouse and soon had a crowd of children around him. They played with corn kernels. He looked quaint sitting among them, his

fair head among their dark ones. They did whatever he asked. At the other end of the longhouse his father had the crowd of older persons around him.

I watched one wretched man with a dreadful case of elephantiasis. His foot was swollen to an enormous size and he had a bit of dirty rag on it. There was a constant discharge from the infection, and everywhere he sat, he left a little pool from his foot. I kept watching him, fascinated and horrified, and made sure that little Stanley or my husband did not step or sit near those infected places. These native huts are full of disease and you can understand how we rejoice to have our clean trailer in which to sleep. Before leaving, we encouraged the poor man to go to the hospital near by for free treatment of his foot.

At tea-time, a young man passing along the road stopped at our camp and Ngiang spoke to him. He became interested in the Gospel message and invited us to come out to his village four miles away. He went on, and we began to get ready to go. On the way we met four Jarai from his village, urging us to be sure to come. The man on the road was the servant of the village chief, and now the chief's son and three others had come to greet us. As we drove into their village, we had a royal welcome. They came running pell-mell, bowing and waving us in with their arms, as if they would lift us in. One poor little old chap was deaf and dumb, and he shouted strange broken sounds as he ran excitedly beside us, bowing and waving. He looked like a little bent gnome, with a twisted monkey face, bald head and feet that turned straight out sideways. He was filthy and had sores all over his body. He insisted on shaking hands with us and tried to clasp the baby's hands.

The chief and his son were very friendly. We climbed the notched ladder into their longhouse. It was a new bamboo house and one of the best we have seen out here. The floors were of thick smooth yellow bamboo strips and the walls

were neatly woven. It was not yet dingy with smoke and cobwebs. There were bamboo shelves for gourds of water and many clean new back-baskets. We sat on fresh grass mats before a wide-open window.

Forty men, besides women and children, gathered to hear the Gospel. Some could understand Raday well enough to get the gist of the story and translate it into Jarai for the others. We preached until dark and they begged us to return next morning.

On our way there the following morning, the chief's son met us with a note saying that three more chiefs from other villages had come to hear the Gospel. We had a great meeting with them all morning.

The chief's son, Y On, asked to return to Banmethuot with us to study the Bible. So we brought him back with us and he became one of the most capable students in our Bible school.

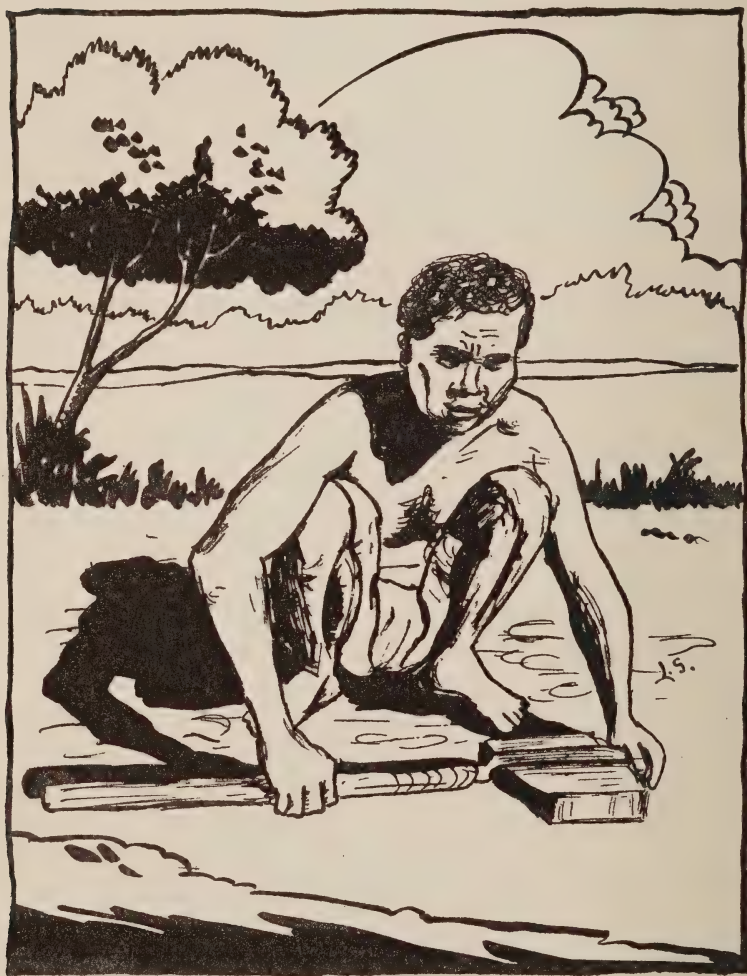
* * * * *

The time was ripe for the Gospel in Pleiku Province. Our competent Annamese evangelist and his wife, Thai and Cô Tin, after much prayer and thought, said that they were eager to go in and open up this new field for Christ. They moved to Chéo Réo, but later on settled in Pleiku town as it was a larger and more strategic point. The French Administrator cordially gave us written permission to work in his province.

Thai and Cô Tin began studying both the Jarai and Bahnar languages. Before long we were able to build a bamboo longhouse chapel at Pleiku and since then meetings have been held in it nightly.

Thai Tin is very frail. The doctor says that if he gets another fever he will die. But he burns with zeal for the work. He has translated the Gospel of Mark and a Church Manual with many hymns into the Jarai language. He is another

Brainerd or Praying Hyde. His face glows with the beauty of Christ. May he and his wife keep on burning for many years among these needy tribespeople!



CHAPTER XV

FAITHFUL TOUY—A CAMBODIAN CHRISTIAN

One day we received the sad news of the death of Mr. Touy, one of our leading Christians in Kratié, Cambodia. He had died of pneumonia.

Dear Touy . . . since he heard us sing "Jesus Loves Me," and tell the story of the Saviour seven years ago in his little village of Kbal Chooa, he never once wavered from the faith.

When we left Kratié, Touy was the leading deacon of the little church group there. We had written him regularly ever since leaving and other missionaries in Cambodia and native evangelists had visited the group from time to time.

In his last letter Touy told us that he was getting ready to go to the Bible school for Cambodians at Battambang. He had sold his water buffaloes and had enough money to keep him and his family there for one term. But he still lacked some boat fare for the trip. We told our Raday Bible students about him and they put their pennies together and contributed one piaster. A gift from home friends at that time made seven more piasters and we gave this for his fare. But dear Touy had passed on to heaven before the money or our letter reached him.

The following is a translation of a letter from one of the Kbal Chooa Christians, telling of Touy's death:

I will tell you about Mr. Touy's faith in God. He contracted a very sore chest cold with much coughing. It got steadily worse and Mr. Touy's relatives became very fearful. They tried to invoke the devil, but Mr. Touy would not consent to it. He insisted that he was in the Lord's hands. When they would tie strings about his wrists to keep the evil spirits away, he would immediately break them off, saying that his friends upset him. He would have nothing to do with the old devil worship.

When his sickness became still more grave, Mr. Touy took the Cambodian New Testament and put it under his head.

He said he was going to be faithful to Christ's Word even unto the death. He then called his wife and children together and prayed in his weak voice saying that this morning the Lord would accomplish His will. When he could speak no more, I, Plong, with Tonlop and Chun, prayed with him until death came to Mr. Touy and God took his spirit away.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Dear Touy had a triumphant entry into heaven and we rejoice for him, but the little flock of Christians left behind will miss him greatly.

As soon as we heard the news we hastened over to Cambodia by the short-cut road through the jungle. As we drove up to the little village of Kbal Chooa again, the people came running to meet us; but how sad it was without dear Touy!

His grave was under a shady tree near by. We planted white gardenias upon it in memory of those that Touy had given us on the first day we visited Kbal Chooa. Then we all gathered around the grave and sang "Face to Face With Christ, My Saviour." Each of the Christians determined to go all the way with Christ until they too entered the Golden City.

* * * * *

A new missionary couple from America is caring for this district of Kratié now. Will you not share the burden of prayer that soon many more Cambodians will come out of darkness into Light?

CHAPTER XVI

MORE CAMPING EXPERIENCES IN RADAY VILLAGES

The trailer gave a lurch and jerked the car to a stop. True, the road was hardly more than wheel tracks through the tall cane grass and bush, but we had been making good progress. Now the trailer leaned far over to one side. Our hearts sank as we thought, "The wheel must be broken off!" The right-hand side of the trailer was down on the ground and we could not see beneath it. Scraping away the dirt, we saw that the wheel had sunk into a subterranean ant hole and nothing was harmed after all. It took but a few minutes to jack it up and put sticks under the wheel, and soon we were off again.

We were on our way to Y Ngeang's village. He, with two other of our Bible students, had left a couple of days before to tell all the villages around that vicinity that we were coming and have the chiefs keep the people at home. Otherwise they might all be off in their rice fields or visiting here and there. Soon crowds of people from the village ahead came running to meet us and we received a warm welcome from the chief. A few in this village are Christians but there are still many who have not accepted Christ and continue to sacrifice animals and rub pig's or cow's blood on their drums, gongs and doorposts.

We had to decide where to park our trailer. The village of long stilt-raised houses is alive with animals, making it a sort of farmyard. Pigs and chickens dig into the muck under the houses, gaunt dogs rush from everywhere, and tamed water buffaloes stare at us from below flaring horns.

We decided to camp just outside the village under some magnificent trees. These rose clean and clear for nearly a hundred feet before the branches spread their canopies. The immense trunks were silvery white, luminous in the sun-

light. It was delightful to pull our trailer into this natural park at Buon Poo.

We made an improvised cooking place with a bamboo screen and branches and soon had a fire going and the supper cooking. I made up our beds in the trailer—little Stanley's "shelf" and our two narrow bunks—and set the table for supper.

A crowd of natives gathered around our trailer: naked children with tousled heads, staring at us steadily and sniffing as they stared; old men with lined and wizened faces; women jostling infants on their backs. Some brought offerings of rice and eggs and we gave them any empty tin cans or bottles that we had. My husband treated many sore eyes with drops and bandaged sores on legs and arms with ointment.

When the trailer was settled we let them come in by threes and fours to see the cupboards, beds and table. They were most interested in seeing their own reflections in the mirror. "A—*baih! me!*" they exclaimed.

After supper, armed with our bundles of picture rolls, Mark's Gospel and hymnbooks, we started out to visit each house in the village.

We go first to see the chief. He is a savage-looking little man, naked save for a loin scarf. A Raday axe is hooked over his left shoulder. He gives us a broad toothless smile.

"May we visit in your longhouse?" we ask.

"*Uh,*" he answers, which means "yes."

We climb up his front stair-log—a split pole with notches cut at angles, better suited to a naked foot than to a shod one. It is not attached to the platform against which it leans, so it is likely to roll a bit as we climb.

The log verandah is an open platform where chicken-coop baskets and various household supplies are stored; also a cage of wooden slats with a bamboo top, used for riding on elephant back.

In the outer room, the ceremonial part of the longhouse, the floor is of split bamboo lashed to cross poles, and it bends and creaks under our feet. Here and there are weak spots and holes in the bamboo; so we must watch that we do not fall through the floor. The roof is of thatch grasses, woven in layers, and slopes down steeply on either side of the long room.

Near the door, in a simple firebox of hard clay, three feet square, a fire built upon several stones is burning. Upon the wooden benches built around the fire some men are sitting smoking their long bamboo pipes.

Another long wooden bench, cut in one piece from a huge tree trunk, runs along the right wall under the sloping eaves of grass thatch. At the far end of this guest bench is a huge drum resembling a barrel, made of two buffalo hides stretched over either end of a hollowed-out tree. A big wooden mallet is used in booming it. Next to this tom-tom are the Raday gongs, ten or twelve brass discs, some of them three feet in diameter. In the center of each gong is a round raised spot which is struck with a padded hammer. These gongs are dear to the Raday heart and much ivory, and sometimes even an elephant, is exchanged for a set of them, which they buy from the Tonkinese or Chinese.

On the left-hand side of the room is a row of great brown pottery jars in which rice alcohol is made. They drink this rank concoction on every possible occasion.

We visit with the chief's wife and family in the back part of the house, which is reserved for them. The walls are hung with baskets, winnowing trays, large bunches of rattan and cotton. Round Raday hats and spears are stuck in the slats of the roof. The back verandah is similar to the one in front and is used especially by the women.

On the floor a woman sits before a loom, weaving the blue and red homespun cotton into a colorful blanket—a back-breaking job. Another woman is weaving a loin scarf, six

yards long, of the blue and red cotton, with fringe at the ends.

We sit on a mat on the floor among half a dozen women. Some young men lounge on the long wooden bench under the eaves. A few young girls sit in the background. There are several fat, droll babies with velvety brown skin and bangles jingling on arms and ankles. The smoke from the open fire near us finds its way out through the roof and a pot of rice set on three stones is bubbling cheerfully.

We begin to tell earnestly the wonderful story of Christ. Then someone asks, "How can I get a white skin?" or "If I come your way will you give me a new shirt?" Others ask, "May I not keep on with the wine jars and animal sacrifices but believe in my heart? Can I not still leave the charm feathers over my door, the sacred tang tree branches on the beam of my roof?" We tell them this is impossible. Faith and practise must agree. It is difficult to uproot these souls from the customs of their race but nothing is too hard for God. We must keep on patiently, earnestly telling the Story. *It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

We visit each house in the village, and learning that death has come to one family, we go in to sympathize. There in the women's quarters we see the corpse, wrapped in a red and blue blanket, laid out on the bamboo floor. A group of women are squatted around it, wailing. We sit with them and try to tell them of Christ's salvation and the victory He gives us over death.

As we speak, a sorcerer enters, and I listen to the prayer he chants over the corpse: "Come, spirit of the dead, drink the wine and eat the meat and rice we sacrifice to you. Come, spirits of the dead ancestors, feed this spirit; take him away and care for him."

A coffin is now brought in, made from a hollowed-out tree

trunk. Crisscross designs are smeared over it from the blood of a sacrificed animal.

Next day we follow the procession to the burial place in a wild forest clearing. The coffin is placed in a shallow grave, and a great mound of earth fifteen feet high is heaped up over it. A little spirit house is built on top of the grave, and a bamboo tube is passed from this down through the mound of earth to the coffin. Every few days for perhaps two years the relatives pour rice and alcohol down this tube to feed the dead person. Then another ceremony is held called "Abandoning the Grave"; at this time the tube is closed, and the mound deserted. From thenceforth the spirits will care for the dead one.

The village people feast and drink around the new grave. Under a special shelter built near by is ranged a long row of sixty glazed brown jars of alcohol.

The family gongs are brought out to the shelter and the young men beat them in syncopated rhythm.

Two cows and a water buffalo have been killed for the sacrifice. The blackened heads, roasted complete, with horns, eyes, ears and tongue, are placed on the banquet table spread for the dead man's spirit. Around the heads, on leaves, are choice portions of the animals—some of the entrails and a tail. A few bananas and some rice are also offered with the meat. The rest of the animal, chopped into little chunks, is heaped on rattan trays. Bowls of warm blood are poured over these. Each person takes a handful of the raw, dripping meat, and stuffs it into his mouth, gobbling it greedily. We turn away from the sickening sight.

As it is hard to preach with all the clanging of gongs, the feasting, drinking and noisy chatter, we return to the chief's house. We pray to God to uproot these old barbarous customs and change these poor people's hearts.

We had a meeting each night by our trailer, at which we put up a sheet outside and showed lantern pictures. The car

battery supplied electricity for the light. We sounded the auto horn to call the people to come and listen to the good news of salvation.

Our group of Christians in the village always came immediately. We were able to encourage and help them greatly. Our hearts were thrilled as we heard them lead in prayer and recite verses of song and Scripture.

We can hardly sleep at night for the beating of the gongs at the burial place. Will they never cease that same barbaric tune?

Each day we visit in the village. I talk to the women as they busily spin their fluffy balls of cotton grown in the cotton field near by.

I watch the young girls hull the paddy. Two of them stand over a section of hollow tree trunk which holds a mass of paddy. The girls each have a long heavy pole which they lift evenly and plunge into the wooden mortar. It is a slow, hard job.

Other women go out to the forest to get the daily supply of firewood, returning hours later carrying huge packs in their back-baskets. The crooked sticks they have cut in the forest tower above their heads and the rattan basket straps cut into their shoulders from the weight. I tried to lift one of the packs, but I could not move it. What burden bearers these poor women are! Their ankles are heavy and their feet broad and flat from carrying daily loads. Most of the women are ugly, with tired, dull faces.

We walked out to the rice fields to preach to the people in their little shacks there. They must protect their growing crops from deer, rabbits and wild pigs. Stanley and I went with two of our Raday student preachers. We followed a narrow path through the tall coarse grass that was higher than our heads, and walked in Indian file to look out for snakes.

After nearly a mile we came upon the field of the chief.

His poor old wrinkled face broke into a big smile when he learned that we had come all the way out there to preach to him. In the middle of the field was his little shack perched up on poles high from the ground. His ten-year-old grandson was inside. Attached to his foot was a string passing through the doorway and connecting with about thirty more strings radiating in all directions over the field. Tin cans were tied on these strings and every now and then the boy in the shack gave the string a pull which caused all the empty cans to rattle and frighten away the hundreds of rice birds that were busily stealing the crop.

In the rude brush fences were handmade traps for catching rats, rabbits and civet-cats. The traps for the deer are very dangerous and we had to be careful of them. They shoot out sharp arrows that will pierce through a deer's leg and break it.

We showed the old man and his grandson some Bible pictures and he seemed tender and touched. He prayed before we left him. His field of rice and corn was growing nicely. Pumpkin vines grew around it and he had a patch of onions. I asked him for some ears of young corn. The Raday eat the corn when it is old and hard. He picked the ears out himself, afraid that we might step on his precious rice.

We turned off into another path. This was a very wild trail and not much used. The tall grass was terrifying. I imagined I saw tiger faces everywhere. We felt overpowered by the vastness and loneliness of this desperate jungle country, but sang at the top of our voices, "I have a Saviour who is mighty to keep."

We reached another field where five people were sitting in their little hut. They showed much interest in the Story and returned with us to the village. As we walked along we made the jungle ring with our choruses, "All Power Is Given Unto Me," and "No, Never Alone."

Stanley was a good little boy the whole morning. He

marched along the hard hot trails without a murmur. We were hungry for our dinner of fresh corn. As we ate we watched the monkeys playing in the tops of the trees around our trailer. Whole armies of them came swinging along on their aerial highways, leaping from the topmost limb of one tree to the lower branches of the next, then racing up the trunks to leap again. They were the large silver-flecked grey langur species, and their faces were tinted with bright orange and sky-blue. The jungle rang with their clear, strong calls.

From this trailer camp we visited five different villages. Some days we preached to forty or fifty people out in their fields. The Raday women roasted fresh corn for Stanley at nearly every shack we visited. Large crowds saw the lantern pictures at night.

The Lord Jesus has sent us, saying, *Ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth.* There is joy in obeying. We are confident that He wants these tribes the farthest removed from the centers of civilization. Therefore we believe that from among them there shall be taken out *a people for his name* who will stand firm and true for Him, and who will be His own forevermore.



CHAPTER XVII

THE WORK GOES FORWARD

We had long wanted to start a work in the immense district of the M'Nong tribes at Lake Darlac, thirty miles from Banmethuot. These tribes use the crossbow and poisoned arrows and many of them are still unsubdued by the French. They live in a wild, picturesque region and the only white people out there are the French officer and his wife at the military post.

Here is a strategic center for missionary work. The message of Christ must reach these tribes of 40,000 people. We broached the subject to the French Administrator at Banmethuot but he said we would not be allowed to preach at the lake. He argued that these unsubdued M'Nongs had many taboos and we would have to tread softly in those places where the French authority is not yet established.

We asked him if we might have a little plot of ground upon which to build a week-end chalet, and he saw no objection to this providing we did no preaching. We felt that this would be a good way to become known to the M'Nong people of that district and with a later change of administrators we might find the situation more favorable.

We chose a jungle-clad hillside overlooking the lake and our request for a piece of land on this hill was granted. It meant hiring twenty or thirty tribesmen to slash down the brush and thick bamboo, and fell trees—some of them giant banyans. So dense was the jungle that we had to climb trees frequently to get our bearings. Leeches reached out at us from the rank growth and fastened themselves on tightly. Pugmarks of a tiger were to be seen in the wet mold. We were relieved when the treacherous jungle was cleared away for a few acres and we could stand on open ground well away from the thick jungle wall.

Then we gazed with awe at one of the most beautiful views we have ever seen in Indo-China. The lake spread out below us, surrounded by great towering mountains. In the center of the crystal water is an island like a green garden floating on a mirror. Pink lotus lilies grow at the water's edge and narrow log canoes skim noiselessly over the water manned by a bronze M'Nong poised on the stern, pole in hand. Long chains of white egrets circle over the lake like necklaces of pearls.

Where the slope of the hill was not too steep we erected our bamboo shack. This was a little stilt-raised hut of poles and bamboo lashed with rattan and roofed with thatch.

We had to cut a road out of the steep sides of the hill but as labor is cheap it was not an expensive project. The tribesmen soon found that we were not there to run a trading post for them or simply to have a place to rest but we had come with a *Message*. After the day's work was done little resin torches would pierce the blackness of the night as groups of ten and fifteen people would come winding up the hill to squat on our verandah, quietly waiting to hear the New Story. We had given our word not to preach but we felt the Lord would open the way before us. The poor people were so eager to hear the precious Story.

We became acquainted with many of the M'Nongs as they helped us work and visited with us at night. They were very friendly and one young man pleaded to enter our Bible school at Banmethuot. We were glad to accept him. Later on he could help us greatly in preaching to his people.

The silence of the night was broken by the melancholy throbbing of the gongs faintly echoing up and down the valleys. Sometimes we would hear the wild elephants trumpeting not many miles away.

The first night we camped in our finished shack we were kept awake by the blood-chilling hunting cries of two tigers and we feared for our little horse tied under our verandah.

My husband sat out in the white moonlight with his shotgun, hoping that the tigers might investigate and he could get a shot at them. But they did not come near enough.

One of them might have gotten me the next day! I was walking on the road at the foot of our hill not far from a native village. I had no sooner left the road than a tiger leaped out of the forest and grabbed a pig. He must have been lurking there on the jungle edge as I walked along. I am so glad that the pig was there too and that he chose the pig! The natives heard the pig squealing and they rushed out with their spears and hatchets, yelling as they chased the tiger. He dropped the pig but it was dead. The natives feasted on it instead of the tiger.

The M'Nong district of the Lake Darlac will be one of the important stations to be well-established later on. We have spied out the land and our hearts thrill at the possibilities of opening many such strategic points. We have seen God begin to work among these tribespeople. We know the future is very bright.

* * * * *

Our prayers for a permanent church building in Banmethuot were now answered. Our bamboo longhouse chapel was beginning to disintegrate after five years of exposure to the insects and weather of the tropics. How we praised God when a gift was sent from America enabling us to build a small brick church. Plans were made and donated by a French architect; the land was obtained and in a short time a new church witnessed to the permanent establishment of our work here.

Our Bible students were completing several years of study and were doing regular evangelistic work among the villages of our district.

My class of girls and women who had met twice each week for the last five years for sewing and Bible study were all good Christians now and had been baptized.

Thai and Cô Tin, up in Pleiku, had won fifty-nine from the Bahnar and Jarai tribespeople to the Lord.

Their place at Banmethuot was taken by Thai and Cô Nhuong, another couple from the Tourane Bible School. They are also very talented and a great help in our work. We believe God will do great things through them among the tribes of the Darlac.

A couple from America were now ready to come out to work with us among the tribespeople in this vast district of Southern Annam. Already the mission was renting a house next door to us for these new missionaries who were to arrive.

* * * * *

Then the war clouds grew darker and darker. Even out here far away in the jungles the days became heavy with suspense. Headlines from Indo-China began to appear in the papers. Crisis after crisis arose. The Japanese demanded permission to move their troops through the northern section of Indo-China, into China. Some of the missionaries in Tonkin were forced to evacuate their districts temporarily. The war broke out between Indo-China and Thailand with Japan negotiating the peace treaty.

The American Consul at Saigon twice sent out word to all the Americans suggesting that they leave the colony. The British Consul also sent out a letter warning the women and children to leave immediately.

With jagged lightning and appalling claps of thunder the black clouds now broke out into a deluge, and in August, 1941, the Japanese arrived in French Indo-China.

* * * * *

Despite the terrific upheaval in the Far East, and the temporary eclipse of the white man, missionary work still goes on.

Thai Nhuong, our Annamese evangelist in charge of the

tribes' work at Banmethuot, sent us a letter on the repatriation ship, the *Gripsholm*. This may be the last communication which we shall receive from Indo-China before the end of the war, but it shows that God is with the people in that faraway land.

When a child Thai Nhuong learned a little English from a missionary in Tonkin. He uses it now in this letter rather than the native language, so that his message to us might be understood by the censors.

He writes:

The work of the Lord is always going. He bless us and the Christians and keep us all in His way.

We have been able to visit all the Christians in the district.

The beloved Christians of Buon Mlia are good. God keep them and bless them always.

Y Teet, his wife and their children are well. The chapel at Buon Hwyn is justly finished and I have been return from the dedication. It is large and long as the longhouse of Banmethuot.

Y No, Mroin and her girl are well. Y No is very good. He help us very much.

Y Leo is working with Mr. Hua (of the Traveaux Publics) — a good Annamese Christian at the Road of Pleiku, thirty-five kilometers away. He have been able to preach to a hundred Raday coolies come from different villages of province.

Y Mil is very good. He has witnessed in his village and all accepted Christ. Twenty-five were baptized and I have prayed with 114. They are troubled by their chief but they are very happy and all are keeping in Christ's Name.

The Annamese Christians of Banmethuot have offered two hundred dollars for the building of a little chapel in the Annamite section of the village but we have not find a good place.

There are some French soldiers accepted Christ. Please pray continually for the work here and for us. My wife and I and our five children are well.

We hope soon meet you again.

All the Christians ask for you all times.

May the Lord be with you, your children and your family continually and keep you and bring you again into this land (Gen. 28:15).

I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Nhuong.

* * * * *

God has opened this great door for missionary work in French Indo-China. He will not allow it to be shut.

Christ has this little army of believers among the tribespeople. We know that its numbers will continue to increase. Nothing can hinder its progress, for God is leading the way and with Him there is no possibility of failure. The banner of the Lord Jehovah is advancing into the wild domains of the poor tribespeople!

Hallelujah! "None can stay His hand."

Victory is ours! We shall go on reaching the tribes in the Name of the King!

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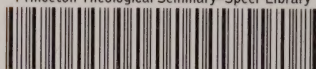
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Gongs in the night; reaching the tribes

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